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# PROBLEMS FOR THE PRESIDENT

PRESIDENT TRUMAN has discovered that the Democratic majority in Congress includes many sunshine soldiers. Less than three months after his Inauguration, inept leadership and desertions have broken up his Fair Deal crusade and left him once more on the defensive against a Congress which seems bent on tearing his social programme to tatters. He can console himself by asserting: "All we have on our side is the people." But his recent threat to stump the country again sounds a little hollow, with Congress just elected and disposed, in any case, to challenge his jaunty claim to be the people's voice. It is not surprising that, on his return to Washington, he has cancelled his speaking engagements and is now devoting himself to patient conferences with his advisers and with members of Congress. He is not only facing the defeat of his liberal programme: he must also decide whether an economic policy directed against inflation must be revised now it is clear that the boom is well past its peak and that, left to take care of itself, tomorrow—or the day after tomorrow—may bring conditions unpleasantly close to depression.

Politically, there are good reasons for the pessimism now prevalent among liberal and trade union supporters of the President. First, the attempt to restrict the right of filibuster in the Senate ended in victory for the coalition of Dixiecrats and reactionary Republicans. Thanks to the fumbling of Senator Lucas, the Democratic leader in the Senate, and to the President's ill-advised demand for Rules embodying simple majority control, the opposition carried a revision which actually enhances its power of obstruction. Secondly, after a determined attempt to block any renewal of rent control, Congress accepted a compromise which continues controls in principle, but, by permitting local option, gives the green light to the powerful real-estate lobbies all over the country. Thirdly, indications are that the new Labour Bill, intended to replace the Taft-Hartley Act, will emerge from a recalcitrant Legislature looking remarkably like the measure it is designed to repeal.

The campaign against the Labour Bill, in fact, has rallied all the reactionary groups against which Mr. Truman fought so valiantly last November. Mr. Hartley, no longer in Congress, now haunts its lobbies as president of the Tool Owners' Union, a body which was refused incorporation in New York State as a "Fascist organisation, with all the potentialities for undemocratic action and danger to our way of life." The big corporations, ranging from Standard Oil to Republic Steel, have united to promote expensive propaganda against the President's proposals. To Mr. Truman, looking down Pennsylvania Avenue to the Capitol, the Congressional picture must look alarmingly familiar; for, to cap the likeness to the Eightieth Congress on which he thought he was handsomely revenged, a new Mundt-Nixon anti-Communist Bill has just been blithely introduced. Mr. Truman and the liberals are being driven into a corner.

The implications, domestically and internationally, are serious. With a buyers' market spreading to more and more important commodities, and unemployment creeping up towards four million, the Administration is likely to find Congress most unsympathetic to requests for higher taxes and other proposals designed to combat the inflation which still seemed a danger when the President reported on the State of the Union. Indeed, Congress may reflect the present mood of the business community, which feels that the moment has come to secure the "adjustments" in wages and in farm prices which, having learnt little from the New Deal decade, it always believes to be appropriate and useful in a business recession. Furthermore, in considering new allotments of European aid, Congress will have its eyes on the growing queue of businessmen who want Mr. Hoffman to give their surpluses priority among the subsidised exports to Europe.

This is a critical moment, both for President Truman and for Europe. Behind Mr. Truman's trouble with Congress lies the struggle to settle the balance of power in American politics. Are the big corporations and their political allies to hold decisive control over American policy? Can the liberals manage to save the Marshall Plan from conversion into little more than a relief agency for anxious producers who cannot get a share in the orders that flow from the direct military programme? Congress has already appropriated vast sums to defend American security. Clearly they are also useful in combating the dangers of recession. How far does Congress distinguish today between expenditure to defend the West by force of arms, and expenditure to defend business by armament contracts?

Already, Federal spending on arms is a vital prop to the whole economy. The projected cost of the Fair Deal is a fraction of the money actually spent on arms. If any relief in international tension could be found, permitting a less frantic rush to be equipped for war, Mr. Truman might well have to ask Congress for large sums for domestic capital investment as well as for the development, as he suggested at his Inaugural, of "backward areas." Otherwise, America could not afford to halt the arms race. Would Congress, under pressure from powerful lobbies, be willing to make the great re-adjustment involved in promoting "social" spending on a scale which would make the New Deal seem like an economy drive? It is not certain: armament production has a momentum of its own. But peace may depend on the answers to these questions. They are the questions that Mr. Truman, brooding on his troubles, must ask himself.

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### The Powers and Germany

The signature of the North Atlantic Treaty is not the only important item on the agenda for the Foreign Ministers' meeting in Washington: something must also obviously be done to clarify Allied policy with regard to Germany. As matters stand, the whole programme of constitution-making and of economic development in Western Germany is being held up by a series of disagreements and deadlocks. The Constituent Assembly at Bonn has been told by the Military Governors that the proposed machinery for the collection by Federal agencies of taxes shared between the Federal Government and the *Laender* is not acceptable. A still more serious stumbling block is American insistence that, under the Occupation Statute, Three-Power control shall be exercised by majority decisions—a proposal which gravely alarms the French, who are equally insistent that there must be unanimity between the three Military Governors. Unless these differences can be overcome, and a constitution produced at Bonn within the next few weeks, it seems doubtful whether it will be possible to hold elections in Western Germany before the autumn. As for economic issues, though there seems to have been an Anglo-French capitulation on dismantling, Mr. Acheson will have to exercise considerable powers of persuasion if he is to induce Mr. Bevin and M. Schuman to swallow America's conception of the "permitted level" of Germany's industrial (particularly steel) production.

### Nationalism Resurgent

Meanwhile, in Germany, there is growing evidence that the Centre and Right-wing politicians are being dangerously encouraged by the belief that Washington favours a "strong" Germany. They seem to feel that voices may now safely be raised in increasingly Nationalist tones. Angry complaints of "Diktat," annexation and breach of faith have greeted the announcement that the Western Powers have approved certain proposals for the provisional adjustment of Germany's Western frontier. Though these adjustments amount to no more than fractional rectifications, involving in all about 52 square miles of territory and a population of 13,500 persons, the Government of North Rhine-Westphalia has issued a statement declaring that the Allies are breaking both international law and their obligations under the Atlantic Charter. Dr. Adenauer, the Christian Democrat leader, has gone so far as to remind the West, in a speech delivered at Berne, that it was the German Army, not the German people, which capitulated in 1945—a disquieting inversion of the Junker slogan after the defeat of 1918. In recent debates in the Bizonal Economic Council, Social-Democratic spokesmen have accused Dr. Puender and his Conservative associates of planning to set up, in the guise of trade representatives, a revived "Wilhelmstrasse" diplomatic service, notwithstanding the fact that Germany's foreign policy, under the Occupation Statute, is to be a "reserved subject" under Allied control. The problem of Berlin is not the only difficult issue which confronts the Foreign Ministers.

### Communism in China

Peiping has become China's nerve-centre. Unless there is a last-moment hitch, negotiations will start between delegations appointed by the Communists and by the new Prime Minister, General Ho Ying-chin. The Communists announced their readiness to discuss terms with General Ho on the basis of the original eight points put forward by Mao Tse-tung last January. The two most famous Generals of the Communist Armies, Chou En-lai and Lin Pao, are amongst the negotiators; Chou is also the Communists' most experienced diplomat, while the inclusion of Lin Pao reminds us that the Communists are likely to insist on a single national Communist army. The negotiators will find a very different spirit in Peiping from the frustrated, chaotic conditions in Nanking and Shanghai. During the past few weeks, writers and industrialists, engineers and journalists and well-known members of the Democratic League have arrived in Peiping, which is now the headquarters both of the Communist Party and the Army. First-hand reports reaching us from non-Communist sources state that food is now more plentiful and that prices have fallen, suggesting that careful plans for provisioning were made by the Communists and that a feeling of security is growing among the people. In places like Mukden, liberated some time ago, trade is already increasing, and the Mukden Railway Bureau plans to handle 6 million tons of freight and 1½ million passengers this year. Trade between Hong Kong and Tientsin has re-opened. The People's Bank of China has made plans to handle remittances both in Communist areas and outside, whilst the North China People's Government has already announced provisional regulations for trade with foreign countries. These are all factors which General Ho's delegation will have to take into consideration when they finally meet the Communist leaders round the conference table.

### Saving Dutch Face

The Dutch made it quite clear to the Security Council last week that they are not prepared to restore the Republican Government in Jogjakarta. Too many members of the Security Council, including the British representatives, seem to be more concerned with the problem of saving Dutch face than with justice towards the Indonesian Republic, against which one of its members has been the aggressor. The Canadian Resolution secured 8 votes; 3 members abstained, and France, the U.S.S.R. and the Ukraine voted against it. Its main proposal was a request that the United Nation's Commission should first seek, within the powers already possessed by it, to find a way of bringing about a voluntary and "acceptable" agreement between the Netherlands and the Indonesian representatives; and that this agreement should be of a kind enabling the Republicans to take part in the Round-Table Conference at the Hague. But, as the Australian delegate rightly pointed out, the Republican Government must be restored before the attempt was made to get the two sides together. And why, he asked, should the Hague be chosen for this difficult rendezvous? As to any preliminary meeting in Indonesia, the Soviet delegate said that it would be a meeting between prison warders and prisoners. The Dutch delegate adopted the usual tactic of confusing the confounded, and complained that the Republicans were making no effort to stop guerilla warfare.

### A Step Forward in European Planning

An important advance towards concerted planning is marked by the proposals put forward by O.E.E.C. to Mr. Harriman for the development of the European steel industry. Eight countries—Britain, France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Austria, Italy, Norway and Turkey—are involved; and the proposals relate to the use of Marshall Aid funds for the provision of iron-ore mining equipment and increased rolling-mill capacity. The actual projects may amount to no more than a selection from those already put forward in the separate development plans of the countries concerned; but, even so, it is something to have them put together in a single plan drawn up on an international basis. Of course, no West European steel plan can mean much unless it includes Western Germany; and there are many hurdles to be got over before agreement can be reached about Germany's share in the development of European steel production, especially at the finishing end. Still, the eight-country plan is welcome as a sign that the Marshall Aid countries are beginning to take seriously the need to plan their production in concert. Much more will have to be done on these lines if the various nationally conceived programmes are to avoid inconsistency, one with another, or lead to "independence" in 1952.

### More Bluff, Less Meat

The negotiations with Argentina over the meat agreement are not going well. The latest move is the Argentine threat to stop all deliveries, including those in arrears under the existing agreement, unless the British Government agrees to pay for them at a greatly increased price. This may be only a bluff, designed to reinforce the claim for a higher price, part of it in dollars or convertible sterling, under the new agreement. But it may be more than this; and a complete breakdown may occur, at any rate for a time. On the British side, the difficulty is that any dollars we agree to pay to Argentina will have to be withheld from some other country, and that even the payment of a higher sterling price will be liable to give rise to demands for parallel increases from our other sterling suppliers. Canada will not be pleased at any proposal to divert dollars to Argentina, or Australia and New Zealand at any proposal to give Argentinian producers a preferential sterling price. As against these British difficulties, Argentina, even if higher prices for limited quantities of meat can for the moment be got elsewhere, can by no means afford to lose the British market, to which there is in the long run no alternative. If negotiations do break down, they will have to be renewed before long; but in the meantime there may be a very awkward gap in the British consumers' already meagre meat ration.

### The Railways in Trouble

Sir Cyril Hurcomb's statement last week-end about the financial position of the railways was naturally connected with the rejection of the N.U.R.'s claims for higher wages. Sir Cyril pointed to the fall in revenue from the main-line railways and to the coincident rise in operating costs, the fall being mainly in the passenger services. He announced an extension of cheap fares designed to attract additional traffic, especially during the summer months; but he recognised that a large part of the fall was due to changed conditions—decreased internal migration, disinflation of incomes, and so on. Certainly a further rise in ordinary fares would not mend the situation; and Sir Cyril seemed to rest his hopes rather on the improvement of returns from goods traffic when there has been time to bring co-ordination of rail and road services into effect. He pointed to the growing tendency for firms to carry their own goods—an old problem which the exclusion of the "C" licences from nationalisation has perpetuated. Sir Cyril's speech was not encouraging to those who hope to see the railways pay their way, and was still less so to the railway workers. The total railway bill (including London Transport) for wages and salaries has risen, he pointed out, from £120 million in 1938 to £268 million in 1948. Yet the railway minimum wage, 92s. 6d. a week, is very low in relation to the cost of living and rates paid in other leading industries.

### Criticism of the Boards

The railway workers will certainly not be prepared to drop their claims on the ground that the nationalised railway system is not in a position to cover its full expenses, which include heavy charges for "compensation" interest. Moreover, they are deeply dissatisfied with the methods of control under the new Boards-and-Commission system. At the forthcoming Labour Party Conference the N.U.R. will renew its demand for a change in the composition of the controlling bodies. They should include, it argues, more men sympathetic to public ownership, with a greater admixture also of men born and bred in the working classes. The miners have similar complaints on this score. Despite the unwillingness of the Trade Unions to do at this stage anything that might embarrass the Government and be cited as a criticism of public ownership itself, there is plain evidence of mounting discontent in both industries. Mr. Gaitskell this week has paid merited tribute to the N.U.M.'s co-operative spirit; but underneath this attitude of the leaders there is a feeling of disappointment which the Government cannot afford to ignore.

### Film Panaceas

Mr. Wilson's decision to reduce the film quota for the next period by five per cent. may be reasonable in face of the many exemptions the Board of Trade has already granted and of the sharp fall in output due to the production crisis. It will not satisfy the exhibitors, who have been urging a far more drastic cut, if not the abolition of the quota. But Mr. Wilson would be most ill-advised to make any further concession on this matter, whether the pressure comes from interests here whose aim is to make way for more American films or, indeed, from the United States, where a renewed agitation against our "restrictive practices" coincides with Mr. Rank's visit. If the renter's quota cannot be restored—and though some people in the industry have urged this, it might well be taken as a violation of the Geneva Agreement—the Government must hold firm to such quota requirements as it can. The National Association of Theatrical and Kiné Employees has asked for the eventual abolition of all quotas, a return to "quality" from quantity production (at the moment, we are getting precious little of either) and a settlement of the dispute with the American film companies. Further, they suggest, twenty million pounds of State money should be put behind independent producers; and there is a reluctant hint that nationalisation might be the remedy if the industry fails to put its house in order. Are these proposals realistic? The N.A.T.K.E. has a stronger interest in the exhibition than in the production end of the industry—it has a big wage claim pending against the theatre owners—and tends to tag along after the exhibitors in its ideas. Each section of the industry is sticking to its own panacea. The only real remedy is radical State-sponsored reconstruction.

### On the Producers' Shoulders

Even Mr. Isaacs, in the Commons debate on man-power, could not pretend that serious steps had been taken to improve the distribution of labour as between productive and non-productive occupations. Indeed, conveniently ignoring the failure to reach, in the essential industries, the targets set in the *Economic Survey* for 1947, he took heart of grace from the fact that in certain industries, *e.g.* textiles, the numbers employed had risen slightly more than in other, less important, occupations. For the rest, he took a singularly complacent and defeatist point of view: there was "no real shortage" in agriculture, and coal production had risen despite the N.C.B.'s failure to recruit enough miners, when allowance is made for wastage, to achieve optimum output. It is sufficiently obvious that no attempt has been, or will be, made to exercise the powers of direction given to the Ministry of Labour by Parliament; to utilise them might, indeed, have been incompatible with the principles of Social-democracy. But the fact remains that, out of every 100 occupied persons in this country, only 50 can be fairly described as engaged on productive purposes—fuel and power, fishing, agriculture, manufactures and buildings. Of the remainder, 37 are employed in transport, the distributive trades and various services, while 13 are absorbed by public administration, the armed forces and industries providing for their needs. It is a lop-sided economy in which half the population is carried on the shoulders of the rest.

### The Budget Outlook

Hard Budget or soft? Certainly the Chancellor has been under pressure to temper the wind, though few students of the national accounts have been optimistic enough to forecast big reductions in taxation. Thanks partly to buoyant revenue, and partly to a substantial shortfall of estimated expenditure, Sir Stafford had an "above-line" surplus of no less than £965 million when there was still ten days of the fiscal year to run. There are usually large last-minute adjustments in the accounts; but it looks as though the year will have closed on Thursday with a somewhat bigger "disinflationary" surplus than the Chancellor expected. Balancing one factor against another, it seems reasonable to suppose that next year's revenue, on the basis of existing taxation, would be well over £3,800 millions; and, since there is a possibility of some reduction in "below-line" outgoings, there may be a modest amount to "give away" without any risk of reversing the disinflationary tendency. It is an open secret that the T.U.C. has been pressing strongly for a reduction in purchase tax, as an offset to the continuance of the wages-stop. Some relief in this direction is as good a guess as any; but it is doubtful if the tax can be so reduced as to affect appreciably the cost-of-living index. There might, indeed, be a stronger case for confining tax remissions to earned income in the lower brackets, and thus reducing the disincentive effects of P.A.Y.E. If he (justifiably) fortifies his revenue by increased inheritance duties, the Chancellor should be able to go quite a long way in increasing both the earned income allowance and the allowances for children.

### Refugees in Transjordan

Terrible accounts of the plight of Arab refugees from Israel continue to come from eye-witnesses like Alexander Clifford of the *Daily Mail*. The issue was raised by the Archbishop of York in the House of Lords last Tuesday; he stated that the total number of refugees living in appalling conditions approached 800,000, and he received general support in the House for his appeal that Israel and the adjacent Arab States should co-operate with the United Nations in seeking a long-term settlement. On behalf of the Government, Lord Henderson listed the substantial sums raised for immediate relief by member States of the United Nations and by private persons, including leading members of the Jewish community. But the main question, as the Archbishop said, is where the unhappy victims of the war in Palestine are to find homes and work.

## PARLIAMENT: "Sweet Liberty"

*Wednesday*

BUNBURY-LIKE, the Lord Chamberlain was repeatedly mentioned during the Play Censorship Debate, though no one could claim to have met him. Did he wear gaiters? Did he come to the office at ten? Did he really exist as a person? E. P. Smith, who moved the Bill, cleared up this last matter. The Lord Chamberlain did exist. He had sent Smith a message about one of his plays: the Lord Chamberlain would license the play provided that the Victorian old lady's words were corrected to "Fiddle, my dear!" from the typescript, "Piddle, my dear!" In other respects, the invisible censor remained impersonal, an elemental force demanding the sacrifice of a play or two each year in order to keep quiet.

Those who led the attack on the censorship were specialists, speaking with the expertness that Members in general practice could not hope to equal. E. P. Smith specialises in Drama; Michael Foot specialises in Liberty. In style they were as different as in politics. Smith is a civilised Tory; he has been known to vote for the Government; he doesn't intend to stand at the next election. His speech was restrained and entirely convincing. Foot, on the other hand, had the *panache* of a Cavalier among Roundheads, an interesting change for one who is normally a Roundhead among Cavaliers.

Both had the valuable support of Beverley Baxter, a critic of distinction, and himself a dramatist of promise and a few performances. He buffeted some of his friends in defending the right of dramatists to be destroyed by the critics rather than by the Lord Chamberlain.

Tom O'Brien, the President of the Federation of Theatre Unions, moved the Bill's rejection. He spoke of the Bill's opponents—the Society of West End Theatre Managers, the Association of Touring and Producing Managers, the Association of Circus Proprietors and so on. At this point, many Members, who had entered the Chamber with the sense of insecurity that comes from the absence of Whips, began to make up their own minds. The dramatists might have special interests to defend; but those interests included the freedom of audiences. Somehow or other, the interests of the circus proprietors seemed limited.

O'Brien was supported by Bullock, the Member for Waterloo. Like Smith, Bullock is a sincere lover of the arts, discriminating yet tolerant in his judgments. He drew a comparison of the British stage with the French, which has no Lord Chamberlain to help it. But few Members were convinced that a good reason for retaining the censorship lay in the possibility that playwrights, holding nothing sacred, might otherwise make fun of Mr. Attlee.

During all this, the Government, in the shape of Chuter Ede, sat neutral and more or less silent. But in accordance with the dramatic precept that the gun on the wall in the first act must go off before the last, the Home Secretary went off at half-past one to explain why he personally would not vote for the Bill. His argument was the practical one that, without a uniform guide of conduct, managements would be at the mercy of the varying standards of Watch Committees. His cautious speech disappointed many who had hoped he would be as bold in enlarging liberty as he was dogged in defending it.

Another surprising defence of the Lord Chamberlain came from A. P. Herbert, whose speech was good enough for *Punch*, but hardly good enough for the theme of this debate. He established that the Lord Chamberlain had always treated his plays well. That is not the same as proving the value of a censorship which, Benn Levy pointed out, had included Shaw, Wilde, Pirandello and Professor Gilbert Murray in its bag.

Benn Levy, the Bill's begetter, wound up the debate. His speech was long because he tried most conscientiously to answer all the points its opponents raised. But it was also the most informative of the debate, and will remain for many years the best summary of why a Palace panjandrum is ill-suited to be a censor, and how censorship has inhibited British drama since its last flowering in Restoration times.

MAURICE EDELMAN

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# PEACE AND PROPAGANDA

ONE of the many disadvantages of living in the midst of a propaganda war is that the propagandists begin to believe their own inventions, while automatically assuming that everything their enemies say is untrue; they then make plans and shape policies on this precarious basis of double bluff. To-day one has only to turn from Moscow Radio to the Voice of America or the European News service of the B.B.C. to see this process of self-delusion at work.

At the moment, the verbal storm-centre is "peace" or, in a phrase that reveals that the propagandist is thinking exclusively in terms of war, the "peace offensive." Exasperation with Moscow's "peace" campaign is easily intelligible. According to Moscow, Russia strives for peace while Western Imperialism plans war. Friendship groups, run by Communists, spring up like mushrooms and disappear over-night. The Wroclaw conference, nominally called to discuss the issues of peace and war, was turned into a Soviet demonstration against the West; its effect was to destroy some rather naive Western hopes of co-operation. It has been followed this week by a similar conference of writers, scientists and artists in New York which has been accorded a vast publicity as a result of the State Department's action in arbitrarily banning some of the chosen delegates. No doubt the coming conference in Paris will also end with heartening slogans that obscure the crucial fact that peace-making always involves compromise even on the part of those who are sure that they are absolutely right. In brief, "peace" in Soviet propaganda to-day means the disarmament, ideological and physical, of the West and the victory of World Communism without world war.

The State Department was justified in pointing out that no conference involving criticism of the Soviet Union could possibly be held in Russia; they add, fairly enough, that during and immediately after the war many sincere efforts were made in the West to arrange for cultural interchanges, and that if Western students are not now at work in Moscow and Russian students not now familiar figures on American college campuses, the fault is that of the Soviet Union, not of the United States or Britain. In short, those of us who hold that the Soviet has a strong case about the control of the atomic bomb, about Greece, reparations and the division of Germany and some other disputes where Russia is assumed to be in the wrong, must agree that it was the Soviet Union that dropped the iron curtain between Russia and the West and began the silly business of refusing visas and using the press and radio as instruments of propaganda. Further, the U.S.S.R. has throughout this period acted as if her object was to create for herself as many enemies and as few friends as possible. Russia makes it clear that nothing is acceptable except complete subservience to the Kremlin. The hope that Socialists would be able honestly to co-operate with Communists was killed in February, 1948, in Prague.

The Soviet Union denounces "cosmopolitanism" and encourages the growth of Communism on a national basis within each modern democracy. But when Tito takes advantage of this doctrine to develop Communism on Yugoslav lines he finds himself outlawed as a Fascist beast. Even Gomulka is stripped of honour because his Communism has been tainted by an insistence on the special needs of the Polish people, and so stalwart a propagandist as Anna Louise Strong finds herself first in the Lubianka gaol and then expelled from the Soviet Union, apparently because she showed too independent an interest in Chinese Communism. If the number of fellow-travellers in the West rapidly diminishes, that is because they know that if Tito, Gomulka and Anna Louise Strong could not get along with Stalin, it is no use thinking that they can be more lucky.

Exasperation with Soviet propaganda methods destroys the capacity for clear thinking even among those best known for their sanity and objectivity. The *Manchester Guardian*, for instance, jumps from the fact that there are many half-truths, lies and distortion in Soviet peace propaganda to the totally unwarranted conclusion that Russia does not sincerely desire peace. In a recent leading article it even suggested that Russia's peace propaganda may be a cover for some contemplated act of aggression. Now, of course, no one can say with certainty that Russia will not be a military aggressor. Certainty on the point would involve an intimate knowledge of discussions within the Politburo. All we can say is that there is no military or other evidence to suggest that any such aggression is being planned and that there are plenty of good reasons for regarding it as highly improbable.

The analogy constantly drawn between Hitler and Stalin is dangerously misleading. The similarity lies in the technique of propaganda. The facts tell eloquently against the analogy. Hitler's economy was built for war and war was extolled in Nazi Germany as the highest activity of man. Hitler's open programme of conquest depended on the Reichswehr and the Luftwaffe. Russia, on the other hand, is scarcely beginning to recover from an invasion more devastating than that suffered by any other of the Allies; war in the U.S.S.R. is regarded as a possible or perhaps even probable necessity in the case of another aggression from the West. Soviet Communism aims at "world conquest," but at conquest for Communism not for Russia. There is nothing in Marx-Leninism to justify aggressive war, which would tend to alienate those very workers to whom Russia looks as the fertile field for revolutionary Communism. Jet bombers are not effective weapons against revolution; they may indeed actively inspire it. We have no doubt that Moscow understands what the *Manchester Guardian* seems strangely to have overlooked—that American arms and military aid, supplied on a great scale, hastened Communist victory in China, and that it was a victory achieved by Chinese, not Russian, Communists. In France, on the other hand, Communism has received a serious setback, which must be attributed partly to economic aid from America. Declarations by Communists in France and elsewhere that in the event of an aggressive war against Russia they would not fight against the Red Army have been prompted, we believe, by Moscow's fear of attack from the West, not from any intention on her part to attack.

In the West most people have accepted the Atlantic Pact with grave misgiving, believing that it was forced upon them as a defensive measure. Our propagandists therefore assume that Moscow is wholly insincere in denouncing the Pact as aggressive. This is an entirely unwarranted assumption, an excellent example of the self-hypnosis of propaganda. In the first place, the Soviet Union has been twice invaded from the West during the thirty years of its existence: what was planned by Britain and America in 1919 and nearly carried to success by Nazi Germany in 1945 may, in their view, be repeated in the not distant future. Secondly, it is unlikely that Russia possesses any weapon which can be used offensively against the United States, while Russia is surrounded by American bases equipped for modern aeroplanes, loaded with atom bombs. It is not Russia which sits armed on America's frontiers, but America—already well provided with bases in such convenient spots as Greenland, Iran and the Aleutian Islands—which now seeks, through the Atlantic Pact, to establish legal as well as actual offensive positions in Western Europe and North Africa. We may indeed hold that Russian policy, based on a doctrinaire view of American imperialism, would in any case be hostile and that Russia's policy, by rejecting all friendship in the West, has created the very danger that she prophesied. That may well be the case. Nevertheless, as things stand to-day, we do not doubt that Russia does fear Western aggression and that she has more reason to fear military attack from the West than the West has to fear such an attack from Russia.

It must be remembered that the supposition of imperialist aggression is reinforced in the Russian mind by powerful theoretical argument. If American capitalism is to avoid a repetition of the 1929-30 slump, what other remedy is to hand half so attractive as rearmament? And if Marshall Aid is increasingly becoming martial aid, is it not a fair assumption on Russia's part that, sooner or later, the vast rearmament of America is meant for use?

No such considerations, obvious as they are to anyone who has a smattering of Marxism, seem even to enter the minds of Western spokesmen. Russian aggression, undefined but menacing, seemed to be taken for granted in the House of Commons last week by speakers like Mr. Macmillan. He seemed to hold that the ghastly civil war in Greece is a case of Soviet aggression and to believe that Communism there would be best answered by bombing Greek villages (if we here interpret him aright) and persuading Tito that we are on his side against Stalin and with him on the vexed question of Greek Macedonia. Major Tufton Beamish only differed in being still willing to talk about peace. He agreed with an interrupter that another war would mean "the end of Christian civilisation in Europe in our time," and explained that a policy of rearmament and full military action in Greece was the best way of avoiding war. But he did not tell us why this policy should have this result, or when the rearmament would cease.

Those who say that rearmament and political union on a military basis in the West is the only way of avoiding war are clearly sincere; presumably they have also weighed their words. What have they in mind? They can scarcely believe that to intensify the cold war will in itself lead to a Soviet collapse. If not, then the only alternative to war must be some form of agreement with Russia. It may well be true that, in the conditions we know to-day, agreement is more probable if negotiations are conducted by those who are themselves united and armed than by the representatives of weak and disunited nations. But that must mean that at some point, before it is too late and the arms race has totally outstripped reason, we must decide on what basis we are seeking agreement with the Soviet Union. If an increased strength is for the purposes of peace, the sooner we make clear our constructive proposals the better. It is not to-day clear to Russia—or indeed to anyone—what type of agreement the countries of the Atlantic Pact are seeking. If we reject both war and a Soviet peace, we must state our alternative.

# NATIONAL PARKS

SIXTY years of continuous agitation led to the appointment in 1945 of the Hobhouse Committee to consider the whole question of National Parks. The main feature of its Report was a plea for what, in effect, amounted to *national* as opposed to local control. The contention was that areas of outstanding beauty and wildness—the Lake District, for example, Snowdonia, or Dartmoor—are of interest not merely, not even mainly, to the people living in the locality, but to the inhabitants of Great Britain as a whole.

Consider, for example, the Lake District. It is visited annually by thousands—in the last few years by hundreds of thousands—of people from London and the great provincial towns. Its indigenous population is small; it consists of farmers who, by-and-large, are not concerned as to whether the countryside should remain or should cease to be beautiful, and of retired persons living in such places as Windermere who are not known to ascend the hills. Those who visit the Lake District year after year, who love it with a love which at once fuses and transcends some part of what men have felt in the past for art and for religion, are almost all visitors.

These considerations, for which full provision was made in the Hobhouse Report, are largely ignored by the present Bill, which effectively relegates the administration of National Parks, including the requirement of making positive proposals for their future development, to Park Planning Authorities to be set up by the relevant County Council. Only a quarter, not half (as recommended by the Hobhouse Committee) of the members are to be "national," and they will be appointed, not by the National Parks Commission, but by the Minister. The National Parks Commission is charged with the duty of advising the Local Park Planning Authorities as to the lines upon which National Parks should be administered and developed; it will inspect any plans that they may wish to submit for enhancing the beauty of parks, putting up buildings, providing catering and sleeping accommodation, planting trees and clearing away shacks; and it will recommend to the Minister that the plans submitted should or should not be passed. The National Parks Commission is also expected to ginger up Committees and to see that they make full use of the powers contained in the Bill for providing accommodation, planting trees and generally increasing amenities.

But—and this is the greatest weakness of the Bill—the powers of the National Parks Commission are advisory only; the Minister may direct and withhold his consent, but the Commission cannot. This means that, for ordinary day to day purposes, the effective power of control and administration will be exercised by local bodies and not by a national body. The national, as opposed to the local point of view will only make itself felt where, in the case of disagreement between the National Parks Commission and a local Park Planning Authority, the Minister weighs in on behalf of the Commission.

This devolution of effective power is wrong in principle. It is wrong because, in the first place, National Parks demand uniformity of treatment; in all of them we want the same kind of accommodation, unpretentious but comfortable, of the type provided by the Holiday Fellowship and the Co-operative Holidays Association. All stand in need of the same protection from unplanned building and industrial development. Uniformity of treatment involves predominantly national administration. Secondly, the interests of Local Authorities do not always coincide with the needs of the National Parks. National Park areas are usually situated in wild, uncultivated districts; districts, therefore, which are poor and whose rates are high. Put up large hotels, lay down motor roads, provide the entertainments of the spa or the resort, and tourist trade will flourish, the rich will be attracted, shopkeepers will benefit and rates will go down. Many Local Authorities consist of shop and hotel keepers, or are concerned to represent their interests. Now, ramblers, climbers and cyclists, whose agitation over half a century has been chiefly responsible for obtaining National Parks and, so far as the wild places are concerned, will be their chief users, are young and, because young, poor. Hence Local Authorities will not be so anxious to attract them as middle-aged or elderly motorists.

Similarly with industrial development. Local Authorities are far from being the best guardians of local beauties. In a case known to me, a firm of timber fellers rented a lovely tree-clad hillside—one of the Hampshire beech hangars—with the express purpose of cutting the trees down. When protests were made to the Local Authority, they replied that the fact that the area was scheduled as part of the South Downs National Park did not, in their view, constitute a reason for not cutting down the trees. As the result, the hillside is now a derelict area, a shambles of mud, metal and shattered wood. One Lakeland Local Authority was recently in favour of raising the level of Ennerdale Lake in order to provide water for a new silk factory; another favoured the retention of a hydroplane station on Windermere. Thirdly, Local Authorities are not strong enough to stand up to the Service Departments and resist their demands on national parkland.

These objections come to a point, or rather to two points, in regard to the question of initiative and finance. First, as regards initiative. Why, it may be asked, *should* local Park Planning Authorities go out of their way to draw up elaborate plans for removing disfigurements, planting trees and putting up accommodation in order to attract visitors from the big towns with little money to spend and none of it to spend in the shops? It is all very well to say, as the Bill does, that Local Authorities are expected to make use of their powers; but their hands are already pretty full and it is far from clear what is to happen if they pursue masterly inactivity. The Parks Commission may reprimand; it is its business, we are told, "to see that what is needed is done." (Then why not, one wonders, entrust it with the job in the first instance?) But suppose that the reprimand is ignored—what then? The Minister, on advice of the Commission, may himself "take action," that is, presumably, he may compel a local Park Planning Authority to take action. Will he, in practice, do so?

For here the scheme encounters the second main difficulty, that of finance. The Bill provides that grants to Planning Authorities up to the amount of 75 per cent. of their expenditure on National Parks may be made from the Exchequer. Good! But what of the other 25 per cent.? That, presumably, will be supplied by the Local Authorities from the rates. Can the Minister, then, one wonders, direct a Local Authority to levy an extra rate upon the inhabitants of the Lake District in order that developments may be carried out in the district designed to make it more attractive as a National Park for London visitors? It seems improbable.

Equally strong objection on the part of ramblers and hikers is likely to be taken to the provisions for access which are included in the Bill. What we have always demanded is that certain areas should be scheduled as Access Land—the Peak District lying between Manchester and Sheffield is the classical case for access—and that machinery should be set up to provide for the hearing of objections to access to certain parts of these areas and of ensuring the exclusion of the parts requisitioned if the objections were upheld. Thus the onus would be upon those who desired to show that a piece of land should *not* be Access Land.

Under the provisions of the Bill, however, the initiative again rests with Local Authorities to make an order (subject to confirmation by the Minister) in respect of a piece of land to which *they* desire that the public should have access. But a special order will be required in respect of each piece of proposed Access Land. Hence the onus will now lie upon those who desire to transform a particular piece of land into an Access Area to set the necessary machinery going to give effect to their desires.

The essential part of this machinery is, once again, the Local Authority who will, it may be supposed, act only in so far as a vigilant and anxious public opinion stimulates it to act; and, once again, we have the anomaly that the relevant public opinion is not for the most part to be found in the area which the Local Authority represents. When it is borne in mind that the Bill provides that access to Access Land may be withheld "at particular times" which are unspecified, but may well be interpreted to include the lambing season, the grouse-nesting season and the whole of the shooting season, that is to say, the best part of the walking and climbing season, the dangers which lie in Local Authority initiative, administration and control are only too apparent.

These are some of the difficulties of the Bill to which, it may be hoped, consideration will be given in Committee. The central defect, as I see it, is that the principle of national control and administration has been dropped in favour of national advice and local administration.

C. E. M. JOAD

# A LONDON DIARY

THE general silence of Fleet Street about the Lord Chief Justice's judgment in the *Daily Mirror* case is the most eloquent of comments. In the past, when editors have gone to prison—one thinks of Leigh Hunt and W. T. Stead—some important principle has usually been at stake. In this case all the journalists I've heard discussing the matter agree with the substance of the judgment and welcome the Chief Justice's warning to the directors. They welcome it because they all know that, if a sharp limit is not laid down, the temptation becomes irresistible for newspapers to out-bid each other in sensationalism, at no matter what cost. Lord Justice Goddard's remark about the difficulty of obtaining a fair trial for the man accused of murder after the appearance of such comments, has gone right home. The press has, I think, always been rather bothered about the Rouse case; in view of the press publicity could Rouse have been acquitted, even if he had been innocent? They also recall the astonishing case of Wallace, where the publicity given to the police court hearing was such as to make it impossible to find a Lancashire jury who were not sure about Wallace's guilt before the case was heard and who, therefore, condemned Wallace, although, as the Court of Appeal afterwards said, they had no evidence at all which connected Wallace with the crime. It will be interesting to see what the Press Commission has to say on this difficult point. On contempt of court, the *Daily Mirror* case has produced far more effect than anything that the Press Commission could suggest. There still remains the difficulty, however, even where newspapers are rigorously careful not to commit con-

tempt, that they may, nevertheless, by publicity during the pre-hearings, seriously prejudice proceedings at the trial.

* * *

Mr. Copping, Headmaster of Horsley Hall, Eccleshall, is a bold man. It will be remembered that it was his boys and girls who were responsible for caning Mr. Wildman, the cane and tawse merchant, when he was explaining to them the use of his wares. Since then Mr. Copping has started a Children's Union. Any boy or girl, it appears, may join by paying 2d. a week. There are all sorts of projects on foot; they include holiday camps, the abolition of corporal punishment and a generally improved status for children. The leaflet says: "The abolition of A. and H. certificates for films, the issuing of driving licences to all people who pass the tests whatever their age—these are small, unimportant things. The control of your schools, the right to make decisions for yourselves, these are the big things." Now all this may work out at nothing or at some pleasant summer holidays with a minimum of discipline, but I cannot help remembering that Syndicalism is apt to become revolutionary and the words come back to me of a poem I knew in childhood, the authorship of which I have never ascertained. It began:

> Where does Pinafore Palace stand?
> Right in the middle of Lilliput Land.
> Where the children, clever bold folks,
> Turned the tables on the old folks . . .

Then the poem went on to describe a royal levée at which the parents were expected to sing or recite in public for the delectation of the children. One passage I have always remembered:

> One fat man, too fat by far,
> Sang "Twinkle, twinkle, Little Star";
> But he forgot and sang "Tra-la
> The Queen of Lilliput's own papa."
> The Queen she frowned and shook her head,
> Then ordered him straightaway to bed;
> His clean shirt front with his tears was stained.
> *But discipline had to be maintained.*

Whether Mr. Copping has anything of this nature in mind I dare not guess. Meanwhile, I wish somebody would tell me where I may find the full text of Lilliput Land.

* * *

Everyone who visits Copenhagen knows the Tivoli, a grand and unusual amusement park. Amongst other agreeable ingenuities the Danes have built small artificial piers jutting into the lake. Water, reflecting innumerable coloured lights, immensely adds to gaiety. Is there not here an inexpensive and excellent idea for Gerald Barry, planning the 1951 Exhibition on the South bank of the Thames? I can think of no more effective way of luring to the Exhibition those of us who live on the North bank of the river.

* * *

Mr. A. J. Cummings has been a sound, hard-hitting and fair-minded journalist. Something—perhaps Liberalism, or what we may comprehensively call the "world"—has been too much for him. In his controversy on analgesia with Michael Foot in the *News-Chronicle*, he really comes out very badly; he is indeed left with nothing to say. The facts about Mr. Bevan's record in making analgesia available to women since 1945 are remarkable and highly creditable. He began by making the tactical error in the House of abusing Mr. Thorneycroft, but after he had shown that the Bill would not increase either the number of trained midwives or the number of mothers who would profit by analgesia, he was justified in saying that to press the Bill forward and so deceive the public into thinking that the Conservatives were offering something to mothers that he was refusing, was in fact to make a political stunt out of the pains of women.

* * *

I must apologise for not as yet replying personally to nearly two hundred people who wrote in response to my paragraph asking for suggestions about the best "features" to include in an enlarged *N.S. & N.* As I particularly stressed my own interest in chess, I was not surprised to receive special support for the unusual kind of chess column I suggested. Three of England's best half-dozen players sent suggestions; several professional chess journalists, with wide experience, sent me valuable information about the chess public. One of these computes the number of active players to be about a hundred thousand, and thinks that there are about a million interested in the game. The large correspondence from chess enthusiasts confirmed my view that there is a really great demand for a chess column. The second choice for a feature was a crossword; after that there were intelligent suggestions for almost every kind of feature. Several people put in, I thought, excellently argued pleas for an architectural column. I particularly like a letter from an Oxford don. He described as "pitiful" the suggestion that we should use our additional paper for any kind of feature and demanded that we have "better printing and longer and better articles on books, plays and pictures. That's what you are there for, ain't it?" To this the answer is that this week we are at last able to take the first step in improving on our war-time typography, which was certainly too cramped for enjoyable reading, and that we shall have more space for reviews and criticism, and also be able to cater for some special groups of readers.

* * *

I was delighted with a story of Alekhine sent me by one chess enthusiast:

Alekhine one day walked into a Paris café where he was not known. He sat down and ordered a cup of coffee when an old French gentleman came up to him and enquired if Alekhine would care for a game of chess. The great chess master seriously assented and the waiter brought the board and set up the men. Before the game started Alekhine removed one of his rooks from the board and put it on the table.

"What are you doing, Monsieur?" asked the puzzled Frenchman.

"Why, Monsieur, I am giving you a rook's start."

"But, je vous en prie, Monsieur, you do not even know me."

"Monsieur," replied Alekhine calmly, "if I couldn't give you a rook's start, I should know you!"

* * *

The English passion for impartiality has odd quirks. A friend saw an advertisement in a Hampstead agency the other day which offered a furnished flat to "British-born, non-Jews." He went in and protested against the public display of advertisements with this racial twist. "Why criticise me?" asked the gentleman in the office. "It's my business to take what comes." Then, perhaps feeling this excuse a little inadequate, he added: "Anyway, I'm quite fair. I have just accepted one that says 'Jews only'"!

* * *

As the Oxford and Cambridge boats appeared round the bend, followed by the usual fleet of crowded launches and motor boats, an excited small boy shouted: "Oh, daddy, the rowing boats are winning!"

CRITIC

## BY GREENWICH TIME . . .

(After A. E. Housman)

By Greenwich time on Bredon
We kept a Sunday date,
But had an understanding
That neither long should wait,
If one by chance came late.

I rose in weeks of winter
As chimed the matin bell,
She also got up early,
And so I need not tell
That all went very well.

But when I went one morning
Two weeks from Easter Day,
I found that she was absent,
So did not longer stay
To meet my fiancée.

She started one hour later
To make the selfsame climb,
Because she had forgotten,
Upon the midnight chime,
To change to summer time.

She thought I should be waiting
When to the top she came,
And though I told her later
She would have done the same,
She said I was to blame.

By summer time on Bredon
Things are not as they were—
My fiancée insisted
I had no right to stir,
But should have stayed for her.

By Greenwich time she trysted,
And gave it to me hot,
Because I had remembered
While she herself had not,
But summer time forgot.

SAGITTARIUS

## THIS ENGLAND

**Prizes are awarded of £1 for the first entry and 5/- for each of the others printed. Paste entries on a POSTCARD and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.**

Tories look for a whipping-boy. Mr. Churchill unlikely to attend Central Council meeting.—*Manchester Guardian.* (C. M. D.)

When I pointed out the folly of a male shop assistant who was coughing and sneezing near an exposed keg of butter without using a handkerchief, the young lady serving me replied innocently: "Oh, it isn't butter, it's margarine."—Letter in *Sunday Dispatch.* (Maud M. Miller.)

In Lancashire it is still believed by many women that if they want to have a male child their husbands must wear boots at the time of conception.—*Sunday Express.* (Barbara Robins.)

Mr. Harry Pollitt, general secretary of the Communist Party, at Luton last night: "We may have polled only 854 votes at St. Pancras, but we have got China."—*Daily Mail.* (B. W. Smith.)

The fairy stories that children believe about sex are far more wholesome to their minds than the real stuff, and will not harm them if they carry their ignorance to the grave.—Letter in *News Chronicle.* (Muriel Duxbury.)

"So far as I can gather," one bookmaker told me, "a victory for Cromwell will be extremely popular with the Nonconformists."—*Western Mail.* (Athan Morgan.)

Whilst he was unable to give much hope of a new school in the near future, he said that plans for connecting the present school to the sewer were well in hand.—Report in *Wiltshire Times.* (V. Jennings.)

# THE COST OF DYING

"UNDERTAKERS," wrote one of them in a recent article, "desire nothing so much as to be left alone." To understand why, you need only look into the cost of dying and the vast financial interest we have allowed to grow up round the human desire to do the last honours to the dead.

The formal argument that the free play of competition in an open market will always prevent overcharging is certainly not true of undertakers. They have never made it a practice to present their clients with an itemised bill; they do not advertise their prices, and they are organised to deal with isolated attempts at undercutting. Moreover, in a house where someone has just died, the undertaker is the only visitor who keeps his head: he never has to haggle. Something like ninety million "industrial" (*i.e.*, burial) insurance policies are held by the people of this country, and the undertaker knows that everyone outside Public Assistance is good for £30—though he can be beaten down to about £24 by any relative or executor who will stoop to parleying "over the open coffin." From July 5th, 1949, the undertaker will have the further knowledge that most people (though by no means all) will be entitled to a "death benefit" of £20 under the National Insurance Acts. No one need earmark this for his funeral if he prefers that it be spent on something more jolly, but the sum of money due from insurance has long been one of the two main factors determining the scale of the ceremony under the tactful guidance of the undertaker and the post-bedside manner.

The other factor has been the terror of a pauper's funeral. In an Industrial Assurance Supplement to the NEW STATESMAN of March 13th, 1915, Sidney Webb wrote: "So strong is the abhorrence of the dishonoured pauper funerals which (to their disgrace) the Guardians have alone provided, that it will be long before public opinion will consent to the supreme economy of making the burial of all the dead a municipal function and a public charge." How much nearer is public opinion now to the acceptance of such a proposal? Could this be the moment for a plan that would certainly be widely greeted as Socialism's final outrage?

The feature of burial "on the parish" that makes poor people scrape and pinch until they can leave this world in a vulgar little pageant of extravagance, and which no mere nomenclatural change to "public assistance" has removed, is undoubtedly the common grave or "pit burial"—fourteen or more perishable coffins in a grave thirty feet deep, a foot of earth rammed down tightly between each, perhaps to remain undisturbed no longer than fifteen years before the grave is opened again as "new."

Is it desirable or not that this business of disposing of the dead should attract the *entrepreneur* and the small investor as a source of income? Consider what happened in the early years of last century, when burials in crowded urban churchyards were at last forbidden on sanitary and æsthetic grounds, and it became necessary to establish cemeteries outside the towns. The unit of local government was the vestry; burial was the business of the overseers and churchwardens; the parish church or churchyard was the place for Christian burial and no alternative had ever been contemplated. Speculators bought up land near the cities, and cemetery-owning became a profitable business.

To-day the cemeteries, many still run by joint-stock companies, have been engulfed by urban expansion, the price of graves has mounted steadily with the development value of the land (in some cases it is five times the 1939 price), and long journeys in funeral procession have added to the incidental costs of dying. Undertaking is a highly efficient trade, protected from competition by a decorous reticence as to prices and a stringent closed-shop policy, and manned by a trade union rank and file working to trade agreements that specify rates of pay according to the weight and width of the coffin to be shouldered and the age of its occupant when he died, apportioning the numerous jobs among mutually exclusive crafts ("Coachmen not to act as Bearers while Driving") and offering "2½ per cent. Commission on all Orders."

Cremation should be cheaper, since there is no grave to pay for—and accordingly no embarrassing compulsion to choose between a cheap and an expensive grave site; and the coffin may as well be of the flimsiest and most perishable material. On the whole, it is not cheaper. Somehow or other (you can never quite tell how) the undertakers make the bill up to the twenty or thirty pounds, as for earth-burial. Mourning relatives readily agree that the coffin, though its life at the crematorium may be measured in minutes, should not be less "dignified" than the average, and accordingly many a polished oak masterpiece goes into the furnace. The charges at the crematorium may be as high as five guineas for the cremation fee, say two guineas for the medical certificates (though the medicos can, and do, charge what they like—and get it), half a guinea for the minister, and half a guinea for having the ashes scattered or an urn supplied. These eight guineas, however, can easily become £30 at the instance of a practised undertaker, making perfectly fair charges for coffin and coaches that exploit the transitory munificence of mourning.

Cremation, however, is certainly cheaper to the community. Earth-burial in this country has already eaten up about twenty-five square miles of land which is always, by reason of its situation, the most expensive in the country—£7,000 an acre was the cost of a recent expansion; approximately 500,000 people die annually, their graves adding half a square mile to the cemeteries—in London alone about 200 bodies are buried every day; and the citing of a cemetery near a housing area inevitably brings down the property values. A crematorium, on the other hand, confines itself to its original land space, and apparently has no such effect. Reference to the reports of cemetery authorities shows that all the municipally owned ones make an annual loss that falls on the rates, though the private companies quoted on the Stock Exchange are paying dividends. All the crematoria, municipal or private, are self-supporting.

The Cemeteries Clauses Act, 1847, prohibits the citing of a cemetery within 100 yards of a dwelling house, but the law has nothing to say about dwelling houses being built within any distance of an established cemetery. Accordingly, since most cemeteries are on land which is ideally suitable for building, housing estates are built right up to their boundaries. I talked recently to the superintendent of a municipal cemetery in London—who confirmed, incidentally, that "pit-burials" of the poor still account for more than half the burials going on—and he showed me where a colony of prefabricated houses extends so close to the cemetery that you can touch the houses by putting an arm through the railings.

He did not believe this was inimical to health, though it seems to me that the sub-soil water must be contaminated over a wide area; but he mentioned that exhumations are now fairly frequent, Home Office permits being granted freely for the removal of the bodies of foreign soldiers and airmen buried here during the war, and even for the moving of bodies from one part of a cemetery to another part subsequently preferred by relatives of the deceased. These exhumations, I gathered, are sometimes carried out in full view of the neighbouring houses. Even those people, therefore, who are able to console themselves that overlooking a cemetery has its compensations in open surroundings and the doubtful beauty of the rows of "monumental masonry," may come in time to find the prospect objectionable.

In comparison with the 100-yard limit for cemeteries it seems strange that, by the Cremation Act of 1902, a crematorium may not be within 200 yards of any dwelling house unless the occupier consents. This has since been reduced to 100 yards in the London area, but either limit can produce odd results. In 1936, for example, the Borough Council of St. Marylebone acquired a site for a crematorium, and it was then found to be within the prohibited distance of a dwelling house whose owner refused consent. Another site was available, but if a dwelling house had been erected before the building was complete and certified by the Home Secretary, its owner could prevent the project going through. As this could be obviated only by the purchase of a further forty acres at a prohibitive cost to the rates, the scheme had to be abandoned. Newcastle, on the other hand, once bought land for a cemetery and then had to sell it because someone got in first with a dwelling house.

"Burial," wrote Sir Arnold Wilson and Professor Herman Levy in 1938, "from being an inexpensive and dignified ceremony, centred in the local life of a village or a small urban community, has become an economic problem, beset by grave evils and involving heavy expenditure by those who can least afford it. But it has never been the subject of public inquiry or examination. Almost alone of all items of national expenditure, it has remained undiscussed and almost uncriticised by sociologists and economists." The situation has changed little since then, and assuredly not for the better. Many people will shortly qualify for the £20 State "death benefit," but the wider economic problem remains, involving land values, rating, taxation, new towns, location of industries, and the ironical process by which the living, through lethargy and superstition, are gradually giving up their *Lebensraum* to the dead.

C. H. ROLPH

# THE HISTORY OF MR. MOTT

MR. MOTT is a farmer who lives at Red Level, Alabama, deep down in the South, eighty miles from the Gulf of Mexico. One hundred and ten years ago J. D. Mott's grandfather came into Alabama from South Carolina. Two hundred years ago J. D. Mott's great-great-grandfather migrated to South Carolina from England. In his speech, customs, humour, habits of thought and relations with his family and his neighbours, J. D. Mott owes a large debt to his English heritage. He is still, in some ways, a Yorkshireman.

Three years ago Mr. Mott was one of the best bluegill fishermen in Covington County, Alabama. He fished through spring and summer. In the fall he hunted buck deer with his shotgun and two black-and-tan hounds, which are worth more, actually, than a man's wife. In the long winter afternoons and evenings J. D. Mott read books and magazines. But he wasn't lazy. In two summers

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tempt, that they may, nevertheless, by publicity during the pre-hearings, seriously prejudice proceedings at the trial.

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> Sang "Twinkle, twinkle, Little Star";
> But he forgot and sang "Tra-la
> The Queen of Lilliput's own papa."
> The Queen she frowned and shook her head,
> Then ordered him straightaway to bed;
> His clean shirt front with his tears was stained
> *But discipline had to be maintained.*

Whether Mr. Copping has anything of this nature in mind I dare not guess. Meanwhile, I wish somebody would tell me where I may find the full text of Lilliput Land.

* * *

Everyone who visits Copenhagen knows the Tivoli, a grand and unusual amusement park. Amongst other agreeable ingenuities the Danes have built small artificial piers jutting into the lake. Water, reflecting innumerable coloured lights, immensely adds to gaiety. Is there not here an inexpensive and excellent idea for Gerald Barry, planning the 1951 Exhibition on the South bank of the Thames? I can think of no more effective way of luring to the Exhibition those of us who live on the North bank of the river.

* * *

Mr. A. J. Cummings has been a sound, hard-hitting and fair-minded journalist. Something—perhaps Liberalism, or what we may comprehensively call the "world"—has been too much for him. In his controversy on analgesia with Michael Foot in the *News-Chronicle*, he really comes out very badly; he is indeed left with nothing to say. The facts about Mr. Bevan's record in making analgesia available to women since 1945 are remarkable and highly creditable. He began by making the tactical error in the House of abusing Mr. Thorneycroft, but after he had shown that the Bill would not increase either the number of trained midwives or the number of mothers who would profit by analgesia, he was justified in saying that to press the Bill forward and so deceive the public into thinking that the Conservatives were offering something to mothers that he was refusing, was in fact to make a political stunt out of the pains of women.

* * *

I must apologise for not as yet replying personally to nearly two hundred people who wrote in response to my paragraph asking for suggestions about the best "features" to include in an enlarged *N.S. & N.* As I particularly stressed my own interest in chess, I was not surprised to receive special support for the unusual kind of chess column I suggested. Three of England's best half-dozen players sent suggestions; several professional chess journalists, with wide experience, sent me valuable information about the chess public. One of these computes the number of active players to be about a hundred thousand, and thinks that there are about a million interested in the game. The large correspondence from chess enthusiasts confirmed my view that there is a really great demand for a chess column. The second choice for a feature was a crossword; after that there were intelligent suggestions for almost every kind of feature. Several people put in, I thought, excellently argued pleas for an architectural column. I particularly like a letter from an Oxford don. He described as "pitiful" the suggestion that we should use our additional paper for any kind of feature and demanded that we have "better printing and longer and better articles on books, plays and pictures. That's what you are there for, ain't it?" To this the answer is that this week we are at last able to take the first step in improving on our war-time typography, which was certainly too cramped for enjoyable reading, and that we shall have more space for reviews and criticism, and also be able to cater for some special groups of readers.

* * *

I was delighted with a story of Alekhine sent me by one chess enthusiast:

Alekhine one day walked into a Paris café where he was not known. He sat down and ordered a cup of coffee when an old French gentleman came up to him and enquired if Alekhine would care for a game of chess. The great chess master seriously assented and the waiter brought the board and set up the men. Before the game started Alekhine removed one of his rooks from the board and put it on the table.

"What are you doing, Monsieur?" asked the puzzled Frenchman.

"Why, Monsieur, I am giving you a rook's start."

"But, je vous en prie, Monsieur, you do not even know me."

"Monsieur," replied Alekhine calmly, "if I couldn't give you a rook's start, I should know you!"

* * *

The English passion for impartiality has odd quirks. A friend saw an advertisement in a Hampstead agency the other day which offered a furnished flat to "British-born, non-Jews." He went in and protested against the public display of advertisements with this racial twist. "Why criticise me?" asked the gentleman in the office. "It's my business to take what comes." Then, perhaps feeling this excuse a little inadequate, he added: "Anyway, I'm quite fair. I have just accepted one that says 'Jews only'"!

* * *

As the Oxford and Cambridge boats appeared round the bend, followed by the usual fleet of crowded launches and motor boats, an excited small boy shouted: "Oh, daddy, the rowing boats are winning!"

CRITIC

## BY GREENWICH TIME . . .

(After A. E. Housman)

By Greenwich time on Bredon
We kept a Sunday date,
But had an understanding
That neither long should wait,
If one by chance came late.

I rose in weeks of winter
As chimed the matin bell,
She also got up early,
And so I need not tell
That all went very well.

But when I went one morning
Two weeks from Easter Day,
I found that she was absent,
So did not longer stay
To meet my fiancée.

She started one hour later
To make the selfsame climb,
Because she had forgotten,
Upon the midnight chime,
To change to summer time.

She thought I should be waiting
When to the top she came,
And though I told her later
She would have done the same,
She said I was to blame.

By summer time on Bredon
Things are not as they were—
My fiancée insisted
I had no right to stir,
But should have stayed for her.

By Greenwich time she trysted,
And gave it to me hot,
Because I had remembered
While she herself had not,
But summer time forgot.

SAGITTARIUS

## THIS ENGLAND

**Prizes are awarded of £1 for the first entry and 5/- for each of the others printed. Paste entries on a POSTCARD and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.**

Tories look for a whipping-boy. Mr. Churchill unlikely to attend Central Council meeting.—*Manchester Guardian*. (C. M. D.)

When I pointed out the folly of a male shop assistant who was coughing and sneezing near an exposed keg of butter without using a handkerchief, the young lady serving me replied innocently: "Oh, it isn't butter, it's margarine."—Letter in *Sunday Dispatch*. (Maud M. Miller.)

In Lancashire it is still believed by many women that if they want to have a male child their husbands must wear boots at the time of conception.—*Sunday Express*. (Barbara Robins.)

Mr. Harry Pollitt, general secretary of the Communist Party, at Luton last night: "We may have polled only 854 votes at St. Pancras, but we have got China."—*Daily Mail*. (B. W. Smith.)

The fairy stories that children believe about sex are far more wholesome to their minds than the real stuff, and will not harm them if they carry their ignorance to the grave.—Letter in *News Chronicle*. (Muriel Duxbury.)

"So far as I can gather," one bookmaker told me, "a victory for Cromwell will be extremely popular with the Nonconformists."—*Western Mail*. (Athan Morgan.)

Whilst he was unable to give much hope of a new school in the near future, he said that plans for connecting the present school to the sewer were well in hand.—Report in *Wiltshire Times*. (V. Jennings.)

# THE COST OF DYING

"UNDERTAKERS," wrote one of them in a recent article, "desire nothing so much as to be left alone." To understand why, you need only look into the cost of dying and the vast financial interest we have allowed to grow up round the human desire to do the last honours to the dead.

The formal argument that the free play of competition in an open market will always prevent overcharging is certainly not true of undertakers. They have never made it a practice to present their clients with an itemised bill; they do not advertise their prices, and they are organised to deal with isolated attempts at undercutting. Moreover, in a house where someone has just died, the undertaker is the only visitor who keeps his head: he never has to haggle. Something like ninety million "industrial" (*i.e.*, burial) insurance policies are held by the people of this country, and the undertaker knows that everyone outside Public Assistance is good for £30—though he can be beaten down to about £24 by any relative or executor who will stoop to parleying "over the open coffin." From July 5th, 1949, the undertaker will have the further knowledge that most people (though by no means all) will be entitled to a "death benefit" of £20 under the National Insurance Acts. No one need earmark this for his funeral if he prefers that it be spent on something more jolly, but the sum of money due from insurance has long been one of the two main factors determining the scale of the ceremony under the tactful guidance of the undertaker and the post-bedside manner.

The other factor has been the terror of a pauper's funeral. In an Industrial Assurance Supplement to the NEW STATESMAN of March 13th, 1915, Sidney Webb wrote: "So strong is the abhorrence of the dishonoured pauper funerals which (to their disgrace) the Guardians have alone provided, that it will be long before public opinion will consent to the supreme economy of making the burial of all the dead a municipal function and a public charge." How much nearer is public opinion now to the acceptance of such a proposal? Could this be the moment for a plan that would certainly be widely greeted as Socialism's final outrage?

The feature of burial "on the parish" that makes poor people scrape and pinch until they can leave this world in a vulgar little pageant of extravagance, and which no mere nomenclatural change to "public assistance" has removed, is undoubtedly the common grave or "pit burial"—fourteen or more perishable coffins in a grave thirty feet deep, a foot of earth rammed down tightly between each, perhaps to remain undisturbed no longer than fifteen years before the grave is opened again as "new."

Is it desirable or not that this business of disposing of the dead should attract the *entrepreneur* and the small investor as a source of income? Consider what happened in the early years of last century, when burials in crowded urban churchyards were at last forbidden on sanitary and æsthetic grounds, and it became necessary to establish cemeteries outside the towns. The unit of local government was the vestry; burial was the business of the overseers and churchwardens; the parish church or churchyard was the place for Christian burial and no alternative had ever been contemplated. Speculators bought up land near the cities, and cemetery-owning became a profitable business.

To-day the cemeteries, many still run by joint-stock companies, have been engulfed by urban expansion, the price of graves has mounted steadily with the development value of the land (in some cases it is five times the 1939 price), and long journeys in funeral procession have added to the incidental costs of dying. Undertaking is a highly efficient trade, protected from competition by a decorous reticence as to prices and a stringent closed-shop policy, and manned by a trade union rank and file working to trade agreements that specify rates of pay according to the weight and width of the coffin to be shouldered and the age of its occupant when he died, apportioning the numerous jobs among mutually exclusive crafts ("Coachmen not to act as Bearers while Driving") and offering "2½ per cent. Commission on all Orders."

Cremation should be cheaper, since there is no grave to pay for—and accordingly no embarrassing compulsion to choose between a cheap and an expensive grave site; and the coffin may as well be of the flimsiest and most perishable material. On the whole, it is not cheaper. Somehow or other (you can never quite tell how) the undertakers make the bill up to the twenty or thirty pounds, as for earth-burial. Mourning relatives readily agree that the coffin, though its life at the crematorium may be measured in minutes, should not be less "dignified" than the average, and accordingly many a polished oak masterpiece goes into the furnace. The charges at the crematorium may be as high as five guineas for the cremation fee, say two guineas for the medical certificates (though the medicos can, and do, charge what they like—and get it), half a guinea for the minister, and half a guinea for having the ashes scattered or an urn supplied. These eight guineas, however, can easily become £30 at the instance of a practised undertaker, making perfectly fair charges for coffin and coaches that exploit the transitory munificence of mourning.

Cremation, however, is certainly cheaper to the community. Earth-burial in this country has already eaten up about twenty-five square miles of land which is always, by reason of its situation, the most expensive in the country—£7,000 an acre was the cost of a recent expansion; approximately 500,000 people die annually, their graves adding half a square mile to the cemeteries—in London alone about 200 bodies are buried every day; and the citing of a cemetery near a housing area inevitably brings down the property values. A crematorium, on the other hand, confines itself to its original land space, and apparently has no such effect. Reference to the reports of cemetery authorities shows that all the municipally owned ones make an annual loss that falls on the rates, though the private companies quoted on the Stock Exchange are paying dividends. All the crematoria, municipal or private, are self-supporting.

The Cemeteries Clauses Act, 1847, prohibits the citing of a cemetery within 100 yards of a dwelling house, but the law has nothing to say about dwelling houses being built within any distance of an established cemetery. Accordingly, since most cemeteries are on land which is ideally suitable for building, housing estates are built right up to their boundaries. I talked recently to the superintendent of a municipal cemetery in London—who confirmed, incidentally, that "pit-burials" of the poor still account for more than half the burials going on—and he showed me where a colony of prefabricated houses extends so close to the cemetery that you can touch the houses by putting an arm through the railings.

He did not believe this was inimical to health, though it seems to me that the sub-soil water must be contaminated over a wide area; but he mentioned that exhumations are now fairly frequent, Home Office permits being granted freely for the removal of the bodies of foreign soldiers and airmen buried here during the war, and even for the moving of bodies from one part of a cemetery to another part subsequently preferred by relatives of the deceased. These exhumations, I gathered, are sometimes carried out in full view of the neighbouring houses. Even those people, therefore, who are able to console themselves that overlooking a cemetery has its compensations in open surroundings and the doubtful beauty of the rows of "monumental masonry," may come in time to find the prospect objectionable.

In comparison with the 100-yard limit for cemeteries it seems strange that, by the Cremation Act of 1902, a crematorium may not be within 200 yards of any dwelling house unless the occupier consents. This has since been reduced to 100 yards in the London area, but either limit can produce odd results. In 1936, for example, the Borough Council of St. Marylebone acquired a site for a crematorium, and it was then found to be within the prohibited distance of a dwelling house whose owner refused consent. Another site was available, but if a dwelling house had been erected before the building was complete and certified by the Home Secretary, its owner could prevent the project going through. As this could be obviated only by the purchase of a further forty acres at a prohibitive cost to the rates, the scheme had to be abandoned. Newcastle, on the other hand, once bought land for a cemetery and then had to sell it because someone got in first with a dwelling house.

"Burial," wrote Sir Arnold Wilson and Professor Herman Levy in 1938, "from being an inexpensive and dignified ceremony, centred in the local life of a village or a small urban community, has become an economic problem, beset by grave evils and involving heavy expenditure by those who can least afford it. But it has never been the subject of public inquiry or examination. Almost alone of all items of national expenditure, it has remained undiscussed and almost uncriticised by sociologists and economists." The situation has changed little since then, and assuredly not for the better. Many people will shortly qualify for the £20 State "death benefit," but the wider economic problem remains, involving land values, rating, taxation, new towns, location of industries, and the ironical process by which the living, through lethargy and superstition, are gradually giving up their *Lebensraum* to the dead.

C. H. ROLPH

# THE HISTORY OF MR. MOTT

MR. MOTT is a farmer who lives at Red Level, Alabama, deep down in the South, eighty miles from the Gulf of Mexico. One hundred and ten years ago J. D. Mott's grandfather came into Alabama from South Carolina. Two hundred years ago J. D. Mott's great-great-grandfather migrated to South Carolina from England. In his speech, customs, humour, habits of thought and relations with his family and his neighbours, J. D. Mott owes a large debt to his English heritage. He is still, in some ways, a Yorkshireman.

Three years ago Mr. Mott was one of the best bluegill fishermen in Covington County, Alabama. He fished through spring and summer. In the fall he hunted buck deer with his shotgun and two black-and-tan hounds, which are worth more, actually, than a man's wife. In the long winter afternoons and evenings J. D. Mott read books and magazines. But he wasn't lazy. In two summers

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and one winter he grubbed and cleared a thirty-acre field by hand and planted it to alfalfa hay.

The books and magazines, and a certain style of life which encourages reflection and thought, made a certain kind of a man out of Mott. He could think while he fished, and he could also discuss problems with his neighbours—why wasn't there a market for corn in the South, even when there was a crying need for corn in the world during the war? And why did a farmer have to pay 10 per cent. interest on his borrowed money when the big corporations hired their money for 1½ per cent. or 2 per cent.?

J. D. Mott once had a hound that knew more about what was going on than the people did. If a man started out to hunt in the morning, the hound knew that he was not hunting coons, or rabbits—he was hunting wild turkeys, and the hound would pay no attention whatever to anything else except a turkey track. But if the hunt started in the evening, the hound knew that it was coon, so he would follow only coon tracks. And on a certain kind of a sunny afternoon there was only one thing that it was logical to hunt, and that was rabbits, so the hound would just hunt rabbits. A dog like that is worth a lot of money, and that dog is longing right now to go hunting, but his owner hasn't the time these days. For, three years ago, the Farmers' Union came along. A Farmers' Union organiser held a meeting in J. D. Mott's community of Red Level, Alabama. J. D. Mott said: "This is the kind of thing I have been talking about, and it is the kind of thing I believe in, so I will join."

That was the beginning of one of the most interesting chapters in the history of farm organisation in the United States. J. D. Mott did not know that a hundred wise men had stroked their chins and said: "The farmers of the South cannot be organised." Nor did he have any feeling of the supposed inferiority of any group of people in any part of the United States compared with any other group, or of any race of people, like Negroes, compared with any other race. What he knew for sure was that the farmers of his area should organise, and *all of them* should organise.

Mott started that work. He organised the Red Level farmers, then the farmers of Sand Cut, Rock Hole, Midway, Willow Branch, Georgiana, Mount Zion, and Rose Hill. Each time he spoke to a group of farmers he learned more about the problems and hopes of other farmers. He became a powerful personality among the people of Southern Alabama. Soon the owner of the large textile mill in the main town of this area could not avoid noticing Mr. Mott and the importance of this new organisation of farmers. His interest was natural, because the employees of the textile mill were mostly farmers or members of the families of farmers. He sent word to Mr. Mott, indirectly, that he would be glad to employ him at a salary of $10,000 a year. Mr. Mott sent word back, indirectly, that the owner of the textile mill could go and chase himself.

J. D. Mott is one of the best wild turkey callers in the whole world, at least in Southern Alabama. He uses a type of turkey caller that is whittled carefully out of cedar wood, properly aged. It is hollowed, with thin edges, and there is a handle made of cedar wood that brushes over these edges, making a sound just like a turkey hen feeding, or calling a gobbler, or calling another hen. A skilled turkey caller can even gobble with this instrument, which is valued in Southern Alabama at about the same price as a Stradivarius violin. Mr. Mott and the other expert turkey caller of Southern Alabama last year got in the same woods hunting wild turkeys, but there were no turkeys, and Mr. Mott and the other man spent all afternoon calling each other—but that is another story.

By the winter of 1947, Mr. Mott had organised nearly two thousand of his neighbours into twenty-one local organisations of the Farmers' Union, and this organisation had decided that the old farm economy of the South—cotton, corn and more cotton—was a dead-end street for the middle-sized farmer and the small farmer. They decided that the future for the farmers of Southern Alabama was a farm economy based on diversified farming, live-stock, pasture, feed crops, and better fertilizer.

They proceeded to organise a co-operative fertilizer plant which would be built with the money and labour of farmers in the community and with materials from their woods and farms. They planned a fertilizer plant 240 feet long, 40 feet wide, and 20 feet high at the eaves. They organised a Co-operative Association, and began selling stock to raise the necessary money. Each member could buy no more than one share of common stock at $10 a share, but he could buy all he wanted of preferred stock, which had no voting rights.

By mid-summer, 1948, over $15,000 of money had been raised, and the building was started at a site on the railroad line at Georgiana, Alabama. Then came an interesting development, for those who are morbidly interested in the racial inequalities of the South. Many of the members of the Farmers' Union, naturally, were Negroes. These people had equal status in their farm organisation, due to the fact that the Farmers' Educational and Co-operative Union of America does not draw any colour line, nor does it countenance discrimination because of religion or culture. Negro farmers need fertilizer at fair prices just the same as White farmers do. They invested money in the fertilizer plant. They worked alongside White farmers in its construction. When the time came to celebrate the completion of the building, the people of the two races celebrated together and, God save the day, they drank ice water out of the same water dipper.

The fertilizer plant is built at Georgiana, Alabama. It handled $100,000 worth of fertilizer for the members of the Farmers' Union, White and coloured, in this area during 1948. One lone fertilizer plant, however, and one area of the Farmers' Union in Southern Alabama does not nearly meet the needs of all farmers in the South. Since December, 1948, the National Farmers' Union has found that there are eight areas in the South, and eight Co-operatives, forming a backbone from the Gulf of Mexico up to Virginia, which are organised by people like Mr. Mott, and which are ready to form themselves together into the first regional co-operative supply system that has ever been formed by a progressive farm organisation in the South. These have been integrated in the past four months into a single organisation under the leadership of the Farmers' Union. The Co-operatives will handle fertilizers, feeds, seeds, farm insecticides, and farm machinery. They will give financial strength to an organisation of middle-sized and small farmers which will represent progressive agriculture in the new South. The battle is not won yet, but a sound strategy has now been worked out.

And meantime, nearly every farmer worth calling by that name has a fish-pond—built by the farmer, of course, but encouraged by the Government in its programme to check the erosion of gullys. Alabama was the first State in the whole country to put all of its land under Soil Conservation Districts. If the farmer likes you, he will surely ask you to come back soon and go fishing. It is worth while to do so, because the farmer is usually a fine fellow, and also he will have in that pond bass, perch, bream, catfish, and the inevitable bluegills, which started Mr. Mott out on his way.

*Red Level, Alabama.* LEE FRYER

# TWEED TROUBLES

THE weaving of tweed in Scotland amounts to somewhat under a tenth of the total British wool textile output. In two regions, tweed is the economic mainstay: in the Border country it is the major industry, and in many communities of the Highlands and Islands it holds the balance between comfort and poverty. Today Border mills and Hebridean crofts share uncertainty about the future. The crofter-weaver has the more pressing problem—how to obtain an immediate market for his goods. He is frightened of tomorrow. The manufacturer in the Borders, still with large export orders on his books, is frightened of the day after tomorrow. Already rising prices have tightened export markets at present concentrated in the dollar world; and people at home are not buying tweed. But there is no mistake about the present activity of the mills, or the immediate shortage of man-power.

Psychologically the industry has not recovered from the catastrophic slump in the 'twenties. A generation has grown up that knew its parents for years totally without work, or on part-time. This generation is reluctant to enter the mills. Still earlier slumps are remembered, and in Galashiels you are shown complete streets of houses that were left empty at the end of last century by unemployed workers who quitted the town *en masse* and never came back. Distrust is an underlying cause of the present acute labour problem. No one, owner or employee, is prepared to offer odds on continued prosperity. The continuing rise of raw wool prices is seen as the writing on the wall.

In the recently published report prepared by Sir Frank Mears for the Central and South-East Scotland Regional Planning Advisory Committee, there is a judicious silence about the future of the industry. What emerges very clearly in the report is the immediate need for incoming workers. The present demand for a larger labour force cannot be met locally except at the cost of an already under-manned agricultural population, and labour from other regions is difficult to attract and to keep. The surplus labour pool, where unemployment is at present growing, is in the industrial belt, and people from there do not take kindly to the semi-rural environment of the Border towns. Young girls supplied by the Ministry of Labour have always drifted away, and have never been satisfactory in their work. As for local recruiting, out of 82 boys and girls who left school in the Border counties of the Tweed basin in a period of last year, 7 boys and 11 girls went into tweed manufacturing; 8 boys—all in Peeblesshire—went on the land, and the bulk of the remainder entered administrative and distributive occupations.

The labour situation is to some extent being met by improvisation. E.V.W.s are doing good work. A Production Unit in Galashiels has been established for the training of young workers. The whole Border area, down to fishing villages that have had no previous connection with tweed, is being combed to find "out-workers," either full or part-time, ready to do "finishing" in their own homes. In addition, some mills are sending large consignments of tweed to be part-finished in premises in the main industrial belt. The improbability of ever attracting enough labour from outside will necessitate a development of such dispersal schemes—even though the transport of materials adds to production costs—if current production continues to find markets.

Meanwhile wool gets dearer. Very little of the wool used is home-grown; the bulk is bought in the open world wool market. In spite of an attempt at stabilisation by the Joint Organisation

for Wool Buying, operated by Britain, New Zealand, Australia and South Africa, there is no pause in the steady move upwards in price. Though prices are not yet at the peak that preceded the slump in the 'twenties, the trend is ominous. The endeavour at present is to produce and sell while the going is good. But even American trade is in danger of being affected by rising prices, and the stoppage of other outlets is causing tweed to clutter the market at home. Should foreign markets and the "exclusive" home market diminish for the best tweeds, the trade might in time adapt itself to more non-traditional fabrics. Its war-time prosperity was founded on khaki. At present, Scottish utility cloth is of a higher quality than that of England. Galashiels has learned a lot about worsted production, and might be forced into competition with the English trade for the home market. In that event the Scots tweed industry as such would be finished.

In the Highlands and Islands the problem is different. The case has recently been argued in Parliament that the producers of hand-spun tweeds require special consideration if they are to survive. So far, the Government has been disinclined to agree. Hand-producers had their own boom during the war, and after. They were the only people making tweed when the mills were busy with khaki. Hand-woven fabrics were selling well until the incidence of the 66⅔ purchase tax caused what was described to me as "a terrible depression in the North." Purchase tax made hand-made tweed a luxury; it is difficult stuff to export, and cannot be readily diverted abroad when home sales dwindle. An American buyer, for example, cannot find the bulk of identical yardage that alone interests him. Hand-weaving is an individual craft.

The Harris-branded tweed, with a considerable organisation behind it, is sharing the set-back. All tweeds that can be described generally as hand-produced are being blocked in the home market by the lower-priced mill-woven tweeds. There was trade union opposition in the Borders to the proposal that a purchase tax remission should apply to the North alone; there is a demand for a general review of the tax on the tweed industry as a whole. The Government, however, will certainly be asked again to give serious attention to the home-weaver, whose way of life is vulnerable beyond repair, and whose products are not always those required by the mass markets. Outside that regional problem, the world control of wool prices remains the vital issue.

NEIL MCCALLUM

## SO THEY SAY . . .

As a comparison of some interest, I have taken the headlines to the East End disturbances on Sunday, March 20, and arranged them in some sort of order.

(1) The non-committal:

*The Times*: CROWDS CLASH WITH POLICE.

*Daily Mail*: 300 POLICE PART MOBS.

*Daily Herald*: POLICE HURT IN LONDON MARCH.

*News Chronicle*: 8 POLICE INJURED IN EAST END CLASHES.

(2) The political emphasis:

*Daily Telegraph*: POLICE INJURED IN MOSLEY MARCH CLASHES.

*Daily Mirror*: MOSLEY MARCHES—34 ARRESTED AND 6 POLICE HURT.

*Daily Graphic*: MOSLEY MARCH STARTS RIOTS: MANY INJURED.

(3) The selective voices:

*Daily Express*: COMMUNISTS RAID BUSES.

*Daily Worker*: POLICE HELP MOSLEY MARCH.

In a leading article on March 26, *The Daily Worker* censoriously observed:

> Newspaper sensationalism is a menace to the people of this country . . . a crime against the readers of newspapers. It is a crime which is becoming ever more prevalent, especially with regard to international news.

Here is a selection of *Daily Worker* front-page headlines for this month:

BRITAIN AS "MALTA" IN A NEW WAR

AMERICA TO SET UP WAR H.Q. IN EUROPE

TRUMAN INSULTS THE UNITED NATIONS

* * *

### The Spice of Life

*Evening News*, March 19:

> Anton Walbrook's visit one day to a dentist got . . . Yvonne Mitchell her part in "The Queen of Spades" which brings her so much success. [Walbrook] spotted her four years ago, [but] Yvonne went off into repertory. In the dentist's waiting room a fellow-sufferer happened to mention Yvonne. Anton, reminded, asked producer Anatole de Grunwald to give her the heroine's part. . .

* * *

*Sunday Times*, March 27:

> Was the Boat Race a dead-heat, and 1877 all over again? I thought of old Phelps, the last professional waterman to judge the race, who, 72 years ago, on being asked his verdict, moved his hands palm to palm across each other, saying: "I couldn't separate them—they were just like this."

*News of the World*, March 27:

> In 1877 only a few inches separated the boats. There was a hurried search for the waterman, who had disappeared. In the end he was found under a bush, a bottle—empty—in his hand. They shook him and demanded: "Who won? Who won?" He sat up and rubbed his eyes: "A dead-heat," he said. "Call it a dead-heat." Then he went back to sleep again.

* * *

*Sunday Graphic*, March 27:

> Oxford and Cambridge crews drove through London in old-fashioned stage-coaches last night for the celebrations which followed the Boat Race of the Century. . .

*Sunday Pictorial*, March 27:

> Oxford first paraded town in a coach-and-four . . . while half of Cambridge . . . arrived at the Savoy with partners for dinner. "Nice race, nice night," I said to [two of the Cambridge crew]. They agreed, but added: "Wish we'd had that coach-and-four. . ."

* * *

*News of the World*, March 27:

> Page 4: "The Chancellor will probably increase family allowances and extend the relief now given for older children undergoing higher education or training. . . All will share in the contemplated reduction in purchase tax on semi-luxury goods.
>
> Page 5: "Sir Stafford Cripps's forthcoming Budget will almost certainly mark time. There is the possibility of a modest reduction in duty on beer, wines and spirits; but that is about all."

* * *

### You Pay Your Penny

*Evening Standard*, March 23:

> Tel Aviv, Wednesday: "YES" TO STANLEY.

*News Chronicle*, March 24:

> Tel Aviv, Wednesday: IT'S STILL "NO" TO STANLEY.

AUTOLYCUS

## NATIONAL BABY

"HAVE you been dun, Luv?"

"No, not yet."

"C'mon, girls, here's 'un that hasn't."

The student midwife gleefully beckons in her three cobbers, and they do me.

A certain lack of adult co-ordination is plain, or maybe this is merely Private Enterprise asserting itself against National Health. For each maiden, though she measures me in the same way, and with the same calipers, as that used by her colleagues, gets different results. I swell, I dwindle, I stretch, I shorten: like an amoeba, I change shape and size according to the eye that views me. Many a student midwife has done me—I am a veteran of eight months—yet they are they, I am I; and the measurements are evidently out on their own, too, equally independent of both parties.

They have entered my variegated inches, each on her own card, and written down my very various particulars. Husband's name, I notice, changes from card to card: a female Turk, I am credited with at least three husbands. Indeed, I need to be something of a Turk, for see the lambs approach me now from four different quarters, determined to Palpate the Patient.

Here also is fruitful pasturage for Private Enterprise. Taught methods differ. The brisk little dun-haired squinter with the northern voice prefers to ply her trade from the patient's far side and toil piecemeal over the slope towards her own midriff: the dark one, who smells not unpleasantly of lavender water, is a manifest Blunt Ender, and, beginning at the *symphisis pubis*, comes round the mountain towards the chin. The redhead, with her whole soul miles away upon some absent boy friend, titillates me in a scatty manner all over the place, and finishes up, to her own astonishment, at the navel. She stares at it startled, wondering what this may be.

But the little Catholic—ah, the little Catholic! Beautiful, dewy as the dawn, innocent of make-up or hair-do, the bronze medal of the Blessed Virgin glinting on her apron-breast, she approaches like a mouse, lays her hands quietly on my shuddering flesh, and quietly, confidently, locates my child. "His spine—" her hand goes lovingly along it, like the hand of a harpist drawn over the strings—"his buttocks—his legs." She smiles to herself, to me: for herself, and for me through her, this child is suddenly made plain; we both see him curled up cosily, biding his time, keeping his secret.

Squint approaches me with a trumpet-shaped object similar to those with which performing seals demonstrate their expertise on striped balls. She rubs it briskly so that it shall not be cold to my flesh—but it is her own ear she is warming, for she rubs the wrong end. The metal descends near my left groin, her ear follows, and would weigh, I guess, about five hundredweight. She is listening, as they have taught her, for the fœtal heart.

Solemnly she locates it, solemnly she writes on her little card. "He's there all right, Luv." I certainly breathe again. How dreadful, how shaming, if the probing northern ear had detected no fœtal heart, nor anything in me but a windy wilderness!

"Thank you," I whisper politely; and she patronises me again with her smile as she says to her colleague, "That's fifty on me card, I'm going to coffee."

Redhead has been rubbing the trumpet for some while, jitterbugging as she does so. For her, you can see, any object in this form means Ray Ellington, the Hammersmith Palais de

Danse, and the boy friend. Laying it upon my right groin she appears to listen.

"Going to the Astoria this evening" she says *en courant*.

Lavender Water is thrilled. "Classy, aren't you? Who's gonna pay?"

"He is."

She giggles, allowing all her available weight to rest upon me as she relaxes and dreams her girlish dream. Her free hand beats meanwhile a re-bop rhythm on my thigh. Both my child and I are ticklish subjects: we heave in unison. Redhead looks affronted, glares at me, and says:

"Can't hear a thing."

"Lemme try!" cries Lavender Water, and the two of them squabble amiably over the instrument, gouging it into me.

"He was over on the left a few minutes ago," I suggest.

Both students have been long enough in the hospital world to know that suggestions from patients must always be ignored. They ignore this one, and jointly pursue the fœtal heart from my right hip to my breastbone, with only indifferent success. However, by now it really *is* coffee time: so they write "F.H." on their little cards, smile kindly at me, and go off.

The little Catholic asks me gently if she may listen. Her eyelashes lie tenderly along her unpowdered cheek as she concentrates. To her the fœtal heart is something to be heard with attention, not just a tick-tock to be indifferently chased and noted in a series of pencil stabs.

"The only one who hasn't heard it yet is me," I murmur wistfully.

She finishes writing, unhooks from the back of the couch a stethoscope which the Doctor has left behind, and fixes it in position. Then she goes to guard the entrance to the cubicle, for we share a sense of guilt: whoever heard of a mother using the Hospital instrument to listen to the heart of one of the Hospital's myriad children, and without the Hospital's permission? We should know by now that we are here only in order to offer fœtal hearts for the Hospital students to chase, and, later, live babies to be captured in the Hospital's records.

Like a turnip watch hanging on a well-padded Victorian stomach, the heart ticks steadily away. "It's very strong," she says encouragingly. . . "Hsst, here's Doctor!"

After all, you can't have it both ways, I argue later as I get into my own clothes in the dressing-room. You can't at one and the same time produce a first-rate baby by Private Enterprise while enjoying at the national expense the very best that the nation can give in care and skill. This child is in part a national baby: the nation gives it vitamins, dental and medical care, advice; the nation's grant has bought its pram; the nation's money will, moreover, support me entirely during parturition; my body is partly the nation's. And the nation's midwives must have bodies to learn on, so why not mine?

I know all this: as a firm Socialist I have known and believed in it for years. The trouble is that at times, afflicted by the utter impersonality of the State—for even pregnant women have their little vanities—Socialism itself briefly wavers.

Outside my cubicle the other waiting mothers have reached the stage of Telling Awful Ones. Through sheer lack of space and staff this Hospital can accept only primiparæ and abnormalities, thus maintaining a firm hierarchy. The green primiparæ, not yet habituées by the accident of birth, sit around with open mouths and eyes popping like organ stops, drinking in the stories of the multiparæ who have Had Something Go Wrong. Nor do these stories tend to grow less horrific in the telling: we are but human.

"Five girls, and we didn't half want a boy. I blame meself—I left the telephoning too late and the poor lil thing came with a rush in the ambulance. Lovely boy he was, too. Doctor said to me afterwards, 'Never mind,' he said, 'you've broken the run o' girls, anyhow; now you go home and have another try.'"

"All very well, that's what Doctor said to *me*, but he hadn't no call to say it to me old man as well, they pester you enough without being told to." The two of them nod like mandarins over their fronts.

A small primipara, here for her first visit and nothing at all to show for it, as we gravid ladies have, shuffles in, looks about her wildly, clears a chair of someone else's clothes, sits down upon it, and bursts into tears.

We coo around her, offering comfort, a peppermint, a glass of water, a mug of tea from the adjacent canteen. We all felt that way ourselves, once. She has arrived without papers, written recommendation, identity card, or specimen, and the blank impatient efficiency of the place has begun to get her down.

"Never mind, he'll be ever such a lovely baby, you wait and see if he ain't, you'll want him all right when you've got him. Got a hanky, dear? Well, here's mine. Many's the time I come in without a specimen, you can always do something when you get here. My old man gave me a little whisky bottle for the last—I'd turned in all me empty orange juice bottles to the clinic—and I left it in the baby's pram when I stopped by to get me rations, and blow me if someone hadn't gone off with it when I come out. Some pore thirsty feller had a turn when he come to open *that* bottle."

We all laugh, relieved: the faint sexual grudge which hangs about an assembly of expectant mothers rears its head and grins at us, hoping, as we do, that it *was* a man who had swiped the specimen in the whisky bottle.

Now we are out in the long corridor, sitting clamped close to one another on an inadequate bench, waiting to get our papers back from Sister. We cannot leave without them: State bodies, parked knitting or gossiping on State benches, we wait for State permission to go home.

And yet—the final revelation perhaps proves that each of us, while yielding her flesh to the State for probing, tickling, examining, experimenting, can still hold something back for herself, her own little monarchy. For suddenly we stiffen, like a row of nuns surprised by a strange man. Down at the far end of the corridor, balancing carefully across the polished boards, comes a somewhat porcine young woman bearing a baby—a baby visible to the naked eye, not merely to the stethoscope and the finger of faith. Here it is, spirit made manifest in flesh, the First Cause that brings us all together, our *raison d'être*, a real live baby.

We stare, speechless, as she passes. Ex-works, shiny as it were with new paint and a final loving polish, pink, normal, downy-headed, and very soundly asleep, the baby passes down the line in its mother's arms, and vanishes without a sign. We shall never know its destination, history, name or sex: but we shall never forget its looks. We know now—even the least imaginative among us now knows—what we are here for; neither shall we ever lose sight of it again.

SARAH CAMPION

## NO BULLY FOR US

We cannot love the Argentine as fully
As once we did, which is a theme for grief;
For, though we don't mind buying beef
that's bully,
The bully mustn't come before the beef.

ALLAN M. LAING

# The Arts and Entertainment

## TELEVISION

When motor-cars first came in they copied the appearance of the broughams and gigs from which they were descended, and there are aspects of Television which suggest a similar addiction to ancestor-worship. Far too much Television is merely illustrated sound-broadcasting. Some of these early misconceptions of its medium have lately been abated—the visual discussion-group, for example, which was a most embarrassing spectacle, or the close-up of a soprano in the throes of delivery. There are still sports commentators, if fewer than there were, who forget to shed the verbal load when the camera is telling the story. I am leaving out of account the parallel tendency in Television to copy, especially in plays, the technique of its other progenitor, the cinema. Despite its many excellences (e.g. the recent *Macbeth* which copied neither stage nor cinema), Television is slow in discovering itself, in mapping out and developing a sphere of interest in which vision is a major revelation and not a pictorial supplement to the script.

One such province has been especially neglected since the war. Sound-broadcasting, as we all acknowledge, has laboured with outstanding success to cultivate a better public taste in music. But Television has made little corresponding endeavour to nourish and inform our visual taste, a dereliction all the more regrettable when one remembers many enterprising programmes of art-recognition which it improvised in its brief pre-war infancy. Many years ago the B.B.C. produced a memorable series of sound-broadcasts, led by Eric Newton, called "The Artist in the Witness Box," and, in order to provide the essential illustrations for these discussions, published in a large edition an expensive brochure of reproductions. The B.B.C. went to these lengths so that some listeners, at least, should be able to follow the wireless arguments on the graphic arts by looking at the pictures as well. On Television, of course, the discourse and the pictures could be provided simultaneously and cheaply: yet it has taken three years, since the war, for Television to restore the study of the graphic arts to its curriculum. The "Eye of the Artist" is a well-devised occasional feature, in which the objectives and methods of the painter are scrutinised and illustrated, but its belated appearance on the screen gives one no reassurance that the B.B.C. is alive to the scale of the opportunities in visual education.

It is not only in the graphic arts that Television is doing less than it should. There are many other relatively untilled fields of visual enlightenment, such as architecture, town-planning, industrial design, interior decoration, in which models, line-drawings, film-strip could be used to demonstrate the first principles of these incipiently popular interests; while a protracted course in applied millinery might succeed in convincing women that few of them have the first clue to choosing or wearing a hat. It is national policy nowadays to educate the public in art and design. To this end the Treasury subsidises the activities of such bodies as the Arts Council and the Council of Industrial Design, the Ministry of Town and Country Planning publicizes the aesthetic merits of its New Towns, and Mr. Morrison prophesies shining domes and palaces on the South Bank. Why is Television so slow to take these cues?

Apart from its meagre and tardy interest in matters of art and design, Television misses many incidental opportunities of developing visual taste. Most of the "sets" it employs in its plays stick to the lowest common denominator of conventionality, and seldom are we shown a glimpse of anything but the obvious. Even its

"signature scene," in which bunches of half-tone clouds and swaying trees predominate, brings nightly to one's mind a reminiscence of Early Cecil de Mille. Some of these lost opportunities are accounted for by the chronic shortages of space and equipment at Alexandra Palace, but a shortage which might meanwhile be remedied is the lack of coherent policy and of the determination to use the new medium to instruct as well as amuse. W. E. WILLIAMS

## DAPHNE LAUREOLA

WHAT a pleasure and a delight are the intervals in a play that is a crackling success from the start! And how this reflects itself at once in the high edge on the chatter, the confident nods between acquaintances at the bar, the excited re-telling of this or that particularly memorable stroke! Such was our happy experience last week at Wyndham's Theatre, where James Bridie's new play *Daphne Laureola* was presented, with Edith Evans displaying a mastery of her medium, an assurance and a variety that are unmatched on the stage to-day. "Dazzling!" "Brilliant!" "The real right thing. . .!" "At last!" "And then when she . . . .!" Such were the exclamations to be heard all over the foyer in the interval after the first act.

It had been really—this first act—a superb virtuoso turn from Dame Edith. The scene, a Soho restaurant, *Le Toit Aux Porcs*, with groups of typical diners sitting at the tables and George, the old Austrian waiter (admirably impersonated by Martin Miller) shuffling the cutlery and taking the orders ("You start with a nice hors d'oeuvre? Pickled cabbage and shredded turnip?"). While we listen to the conversation at the different tables, our eyes soon focus on one solitary, arrestingly dressed figure, sitting apart on a banquette and occasionally swallowing a double brandy and immediately ordering another. To a table nearby comes a Polish student carrying an octavo-sized edition of Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, and close on his heels one of those vulgar, raucous, talkative business men you sometimes meet in trains, a man who cannot stop engaging everyone all the time in bright banal conversation. And then, into the middle of the snatches of talk that we have been engaged with, suddenly the brandy-drinking lady hurls a burst of contralto song, and when the astonishment has died down, she proceeds to talk passionately, if a little thickly, about Life and to turn on the company a stream of reminiscence and highly seasoned invective. The other diners treat her with that mixture of embarrassment and fascination which we English adopt in the face of any exhibition. All except the young Polish student. He is gazing at her with a look of rapt devotion. She has just finished taking all their addresses and promising to invite them all to tea when in comes a fine-looking young chauffeur who firmly pays her bill and firmly insists on her coming home, with the quiet insistence of a male nurse towards a patient.

This is the first act—a marvellous solo comic turn; and if the play were to give us nothing else, our evening would already have been made. We talked of nothing else in the interval but Dame Edith's brilliance, but there is a further pleasure in the intervals of a play that is really "going"—the pleasure of anticipation. We filed back in again with our interest thoroughly quickened. Who was the brandy-drinking lady? Where did she come from, where did she fit in? And yet already we have the suspicion that this is not a straightforward psychological drama and that we shan't get the kind of answers we would expect from that. Still, an answer of some sort we do get straight away. The second act is placed in a summer-house in Hampstead; and the simple setting exactly suggests which part: the millionaires' end. On a chaise-longue Sir Joseph Pitts, aged 83; and sitting by his side attentive, elegant, tender, the brandy-drinking lady from *Le Toit Aux Porcs*. But quite, quite different. Here is a woman touchingly protective as she watches over the last faintly glowing embers of her husband's long life. It is hard to see any connection at first between her and the person we last saw. And clearly she sees none herself. She hasn't the faintest stirring of recollection when the servant (the handsome chauffeur of the last act now in black coat and striped trousers) announces a visitor to tea by invitation—a foreigner—and nudges her and tries to recall to her vacant memory where she met him. Blankly she tells him to show in the guest. And so, one after another, clutching, so to speak, the invitations she has sent them, come in the diners from *Le Toit Aux Porcs*, socially overwhelmed at finding themselves guests in this millionaire house. The comedy scenes which follow are brilliantly devised, stroke upon stroke; they all derive from the exquisite manners and perfect poise of the now admirably adjusted social being, Lady Pitts. She is a Great Lady in absolute command of her surroundings, a hostess of the kind who will dispel in a moment any social friction; a hostess with whom the shy no longer feel shy, nor the awkward awkward; the misfits with her will be charmed to fit in. (Dame Edith simply exudes this character at every pore.) She can even magnificently carry off the Byronic advances of the romantic Pole (to which Mr. Peter Finch gives a fine *brio* and an admirable declamatory style). But later, at the end of the scene, when he flings at her feet the whole of his extravagant devotion, she does begin to falter, and we do see then the connection with that other side of her. Very skilfully Dame Edith and Mr. Finch shade over from the comic to the serious. She rejects his admiration in downright terms; she is fifty and feels finished. All *that* is behind her. But when he clutches her arm she turns and gives his hand over her arm a long lingering caressing look (notice the great artistry of this little scene), a look that bridges the gap in her divided nature and brings her back face to face with him and his kiss. And on that scene her husband potters in as the curtain falls.

A perfect little act (this is really a four-acter divided into three). Brilliant, dazzling, the real right thing! One can only repeat oneself. Indeed one only has time to, for the third act curtain rises straight away. The act that follows belongs by rights to Mr. Felix Aylmer as the old millionaire; and it seems to consist of two dialogues, the first with the romantic Pole, the second with his wife; and here her whole background is sketched in for us: her childhood, her marriage, her breakdown, which has left behind it a trail of spasmodic outbreaks. But this sketching is only incidental. What really happens here is an exquisite evocation of extreme old age at the edge of the cliff, far beyond caring for itself, only suggesting, indifferently as from the very verge of life, to extreme youth that it shouldn't light itself in vain, to middle-age that it should not burn its fingers. How beautifully exact is Mr. Felix Aylmer in these scenes. He gets to the last nicety that tetchy, kindly curtness that derives from three of the principal sources of authority in private life—wealth, old age and deafness.

These two acts, setting out with immense high spirits and moving from there to the romantic, to the pathetic, send us out to the second interval with our excitement still bubbling. We know better now where we are. This is, in form, a neo-Shavian play, though one cannot quite call it a play of ideas. Not because there is any scarcity of ideas—far from it. The air is thick with them—but the ideas are not directed towards any intellectual end. The ideas here are subservient to the evocations of mood. All the same, as we return from this interval for the first time we may begin to be uneasy. How on earth can he round it off? We have, too, some reason to be doubting. Experience has formed in us the impression that Mr. Bridie, in this kind of play, can sometimes flounder. He starts so many hares, and instead of choosing one (or even two) to hunt down to the end, he has often in the past, like an untrained puppy, seemed to jump from one to the other to the next, and ended by catching none. (One instance of this has already occurred. The Polish student explains himself to Lady Pitts as a Presbyterian. A Shavian touch which is ultimately quietly dropped.) Nor is the opening of this last act, back in the Soho restaurant, reassuring. We know that presently Lady Pitts must make her entrance. But it is too long before she does. Luckily Mr. Frank Pettingell is there to keep the thing going as well as can be. And we needn't, after all, have worried. From the moment when Lady Pitts comes in with her new husband we know at once that it's going to be all right. And it is, down to the very end!

I don't know that my account, as I read it through, has really done justice to the continuously comic delight of Mr. Bridie's new play nor yet, to the full, to Dame Edith's great performance. She is now at the very height of her powers. This play will be revived many times in the future, and we who have seen Edith Evans in it will long bore the less fortunate with our comparisons. And finally I must record as one of the great pleasures of the evening the pleasure of hearing the resources of our language being fully called into play. A literary view? Not a bit of it. You only have to see how the actors respond to something they can really get their teeth round. You only have to hear the audience giving a gasp of pleasure when a passage or a phrase of packed language takes them full in the face. Mr. Bridie is primarily, in his use of language, a rhetorician. Wit, poetry, invective, declamation—he uses them all with a fine free vigour, and he comes in good time to remind us that rhetoric has always been an essential element of the theatre; that language properly used is as much "good theatre" as any well-devised situation or sudden surprise. T. C. WORSLEY

## THE MOVIES

### "Angelina," at the Academy
### "Mr. Blandings Builds His Dream House" and "The Window," at the Gaumont and the Marble Arch Pavilion

Memories of Anna Magnani take us back a couple of years to the heart-lifting surprises of *Open City*. Impossible now to detach the two: the whole film, with its casual tragic stamp of the war, remains indelible, and one remembers as part of it the heroine who, sitting out on tenement stairs or listening for the screech of cars, died halfway through. That occasion, I have little doubt, provided great acting of the kind especial to the screen. The camera has a literal and insatiable eye; it sees acutely and it looks not only at but round an actor. Under such scrutiny the performance that obviously seeks to draw attention, that would eclipse all but itself, is a bad performance; and the whole art of screen acting is to attain intensity while matching surroundings. It must never post-date its appeal to an audience; it must reinstate that fourth wall which generations in the theatre have taken away. In *Open City* Anna Magnani realised this unwatched art to perfection.

Here she is again in *Angelina*, and again the performance dazzles with its overflowing naturalness. Her manner of looking, speaking, gesturing couldn't, one thinks, be otherwise. In a crowd, in the distance, she may be nobody; but the moment she opens her mouth or makes a movement we are made to feel that vitality counts for more than beauty, that in fact—conforming to no ideal—it creates its own beauty. Supremely herself, she gets—or at any rate goes—her way by nature, strong voiced, harassed and active, loving, spontaneous, the enforced heroine of a hard life as the Bovarys and Miss Julias are of ruinous dreaming. But already, such is the effect imposed, I have confounded Anna Magnani with the roles she plays.

This time, as a policeman's wife in a world of post-war needs, she fights the battle for bread and spaghetti and dry housing, and frightens or charms the authorities into providing some things people want. She strikes a blow at black markets, leads an army of squatters into

an unfinished block of flats, is elected mayor, starts a parliamentary campaign, and then returns to an unruly family pining from neglect.

Half the film is a spirited revelation of the peacetime miseries that have succeeded to war, while the other half gives in to a happy ending for which make-believe about a millionaire converted to good works have to pave the way. The issues of peace are not clear-cut as those of war; false sentiment, compromises, fabrications of plot begin to creep in; between *Vivere in Pace*, Luigi Zampa's war film, and *Angelina*, tragedy and certainty seem equally to have been lost. No one will pretend that, taken as a whole, this new film comes up to the old; but realism and compassionate high spirits gain a partial victory, and the acting, not only of Anna Magnani but of many others, enormously adds to our enjoyment.

*Mr. Blandings Builds his Dream House* has some mild fun with an advertising man who falls for an advertisement of a tumble-down house in the wilds. The charm of domestic irritations is expertly conveyed by Myrna Loy and Cary Grant, with Melvyn Douglas as an innocent intervener. This is smooth, bright comedy, not untinged by the lures it sets out to deride. In the same programme *The Window* makes a far quicker appeal with its adventure of a small boy, delightfully played by Bobby Driscoll, who witnesses a murder in a New York tenement. Story, direction (by Ted Tetzlaff), photography, acting, and the urban background have combined handsomely in a well-made little piece. The only fault I have to find with it is that, while its episode grows out of a heat-wave, nobody looks hot.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

## THE BALLET

THE enlightened managements of six London theatres now give us programmes of dancing. Much of it is not strictly ballet. Nevertheless such variety, such bounty enable us to enjoy an interesting cross-section. The level is fortunately high. Apart from what is reviewed below, we have Carmona and Andes at the Torch Theatre, whose Spanish dancing forms an exotic contrast to Mariemma's at the Princes. Mrinalini Sarabhai and her Indian troupe perform at the St. Martin's Theatre, while Eleanor Powell delights us in a very different way at the Palladium with the sustained brilliance of her tap-dancing. (If only she would not explain the technicalities.) Further away in Islington, the Junior Wells Company dance a diverse repertoire with more verve than polish.

Sadler's Wells have revived Frederick Ashton's ballet *Apparitions* in a slightly altered version at Covent Garden. The story is about a Byronesque poet (Robert Helpmann) discovered in the grey-green gloom of a Fonthill Gothic Library. This Peacockian figure is trying to perfect a sonnet called *L'Amour Suprême*. To stimulate his imagination he takes laudanum; but it only induces disturbing dreams. During three nightmares, a ravishing dancer (Margot Fonteyn) constantly eludes him at a ball: is discovered dead on a bier in a snowstorm: is metamorphosed into a hag who forces her horrible embraces on him. Re-awakened he commits suicide. To some, this Romantic flummery may seem a bit precious. Perhaps the larger scale production vulgarises it. All the same the old magic still works. There can be no doubt that Ashton is our best choreographer. He is also the only man alive (except Balanchine) who can compare in stature with Massine. Where others fall back on mime, theatrical mannerisms, cinematic inventions and any other tricks they can filch, Ashton always draws upon the great tradition of pure ballet, whether he is composing in a comic, a romantic or a classic idiom. The sharp, lyrical brilliance of his invention glitters most brightly in Scene II of *Apparitions*. Elaborately ornamented patterns change and develop—are always sustained. A real virtuoso, he spins girls like opalescent tops in and out of one another's path across the stage. Surely in the wings they continue to revolve. The decor is very nearly Beaton's best—an improvement on the previous version, except that some of his lighting tricks recall the film studio, and an immense crucifix projected on to the cyclorama suggests a crusading poster. Beaton's qualities have at last crystallised. A sense of colour redolent of the jeweller's window, an exact knowledge of his limitations and, above all, taste—these support him when his artistry lets him down. Constant Lambert returns to conduct his pyrotechnical arrangement of some pieces by Liszt. His brio makes a pleasant change from the flat accompaniments which have recently deflated ballet performances.

Those who go to the Princes Theatre expecting to see a flashy Carmen rolling her eyes through a tangle of hair at the gallery may be disappointed. Mariemma is not a gipsy dancer. Her exquisite dancing belongs to the straight Spanish school. Unfortunately she has made a few concessions to popular taste, which weaken rather than strengthen her impact. She has lost the magnificent *hauteur* we expect from a traditional Spanish dancer, without acquiring any gipsy brilliance. Instead she is arch to the point of being dainty. This is a reflection on her manner, not on her dancing which is always excellent. You do not have to fight your way to it through a jungle of superfluous gesture, as in some flamenco. Clarity and precision shine out, unadulterated, unenriched. The tricky stutter of her castanets and the intricate drumming of her heels are beautifully modulated; and all this complicated detail is contained within gracefully outlined movements. Her dancing is like a well-executed roulade, in which not one note spoils the roundness of the phrasing. Paco Fernandez and José Toledano, her two partners, accompany Mariemma with immaculate dancing. Together they do two flamenco dances, which are as exciting as anything else in the programme—why, when she has two such adequate male partners, does Mariemma perform a selection of Basque dances, designed for a man? These masquerades are never successful.

JOHN RICHARDSON

### Two Concerts

It was delightful to hear again Haydn's *Creation*. The mood of sunny optimism and fearless reverence, the happy acceptance of each fresh manifestation of the Creator's inventive talent and the matching of each with a descriptive vignette in terms of music—these features were for long regarded as below the dignity of "serious oratorio"; but the music remains wonderfully fresh, and full of beautiful details which repay the care lavished on the score by Sir Thomas Beecham in a recent Royal Philharmonic concert. The orchestra responded finely, and the Luton Choir acceptably; but not all the soloists were as "pleasing to the senses" as Haydn would have wished. René Soames succeeded by virtue of sheer style; but Trevor Anthony sang too untidily to do justice to the glorious music of the angel Raphael. Gordon Clinton, as Adam, made almost as striking an impression in the Garden of Eden as in the beer-garden of Wozzeck; he is a high baritone of substance, with a brilliant attack and a strongly marked vocal "character," who seems cut out for opera, and needs only a rather more polished technique and style to make him into a considerable artist.

The New Era Concert Society presented, according to its custom, a more varied and better balanced programme than is usually to be heard at the Albert Hall. Michael Tippett's *Double String Concerto*, an uneven work which is often beautiful and never uninteresting, was followed by a performance of Falla's *Nights in the Gardens of Spain* with a very interesting Spanish pianist in Gonzalo Soriano, whose exact and delicate rhythmic sense was imperfectly matched by the Philharmonia Orchestra under Richard Austin. A trudging, sleepy performance of the Brahms *Requiem* provided the least satisfactory part of the evening, but even this was redeemed by the exquisite singing of the soprano solo by Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, who maintained a more even flow of cantilena than she usually achieves amid the excitements of the operatic stage.

# Correspondence

## AFRICAN MUTILATIONS

SIR,—Critic performed a notable service to humanity when he printed (March 19) the facts about female circumcision, as it is performed by Muslims in the Sudan. It wanted some courage to describe it. Thanks to Lady Huddleston our attention has been directed to this particular region. But is it generally realised that this cruel rite is performed over the greater part of Africa, including many regions under the British and French flags? It is, as Dr. Clifford Allen reminded your readers last week, far older than Islam and must go back to Neolithic times at least. Male circumcision was practised when the palettes of pre-dynastic Egypt were engraved. There is a full record of the facts in Hasting's *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, an authority which anthropologists still treat with respect, though the scholars who produced it belonged to the last generation. In one of several articles on this subject, the range of female circumcision is described; it includes Negro peoples of West Africa—Sierra Leone, Guinea, Senegambia, Benin, Akikuyu and Masai down to some Bechuanas. It is noteworthy that the most vigorous of the Bantu tribes, the Zulus, do not practise it. It is spread over the whole of North-East Africa, whether Muslim, pagan or Christian, though happily it is dying out among Muslims and Copts in Egypt.

In this N.E. area, which includes the Sudan, Abyssinia and Somaliland, the worst atrocity is performed, "infibulation." This is the closing after circumcision (often by suture) of the *labia*, leaving only a small aperture. At marriage the *vulva* is forcibly re-opened, additional laceration often becoming necessary at parturition, but in many cases infibulation is repeated time after time, as when the husband is going on a journey. (Crusaders occasionally did something of the kind, if we may trust the Scottish tradition.) This practice is, or was, common also in Arabia, Malaya, and in some Indonesian islands.

One need not be a trained anthropologist to realise how such a practice, repeated through countless centuries, must degrade and retard peoples which retain it. The wrong done to the girl is not merely that the operation itself is cruel, insanitary (stone knives being in some regions the traditional instruments) and likely to cause lasting psychological injury. As Critic pointed out, it means that the sexual act will always be sheer pain for the woman, while needless suffering is added to childbirth. What this implies in sadism among the men can be imagined. A culture that preserves this institution is brutalised at the springs of emotion.

Critic and Dr. Allen are doubtless right in relying on education to make an end of these practices. To prohibit them would be ineffective, until an influential minority calls for reform. But a good deal can be done to hasten the process. In Abyssinia the Jesuit missionaries tried to stop the practice in the sixteenth century and failed. Perhaps, if the medical and psychological evidence were laid before him, the Emperor could now act. The cultural focus of Muslim Africa is El Azhar University in Cairo, to which students, who will afterwards administer the Canon Law, flock (often on foot) from all over the continent. There was a liberal minority among its Divines, when I knew a few of them long ago; I am told that they are stronger to-day. If, in Cairo or at Khartoum, or both of them, some respected *Ulema* (Divines), were to issue a *fetura* (interpretation of Canon Law) discouraging or condemning female circumcision and infibulation, the victory would be won, and after some delay for publicity, administrative action would be possible. Happily there is no sanction for either practice in the Koran. Europeans must act with discretion. Perhaps Indian Muslims, who have never practised these rites, might take the initiative in rousing public opinion.

The case of the many pagan tribes who practise female circumcision is more complicated. Usually it forms part of the rites of initiation and is celebrated with great solemnity. A girl's standing in her tribe depends on it. To weaken the significance of initiations would be a grave error; the morals and happiness of the tribe are centred in it. A world-

wide tradition demands some form of mutilation in these rites, presumably as a sacrifice to the god of fertility; a tooth or a finger-joint serves the purpose in some regions. Could a harmless form of mutilation be suggested instead of female circumcision? The Greeks on occasion sacrificed a lock of hair; in Mexico and Peru an external gash, which does no lasting harm, plays the part of the horrible African operation.

May I, in conclusion, suggest to the Colonial Office that it might in concert with the Foreign Office consider the study of this question with a view to action on an all-African scale? As to the facts, there is ample material available in anthropological literature; what has to be studied is a tactic for reform, including the discovery of a substitute. Should a tactful field-anthropologist, preferably a woman, be sent out to report; and should not the French be consulted with a view to joint action? I venture to make these suggestions for the consideration of Mr. Creech-Jones, in the belief that he may have it in his power to free African women from a load of misery and degradation that dates from the night of time.

H. N. BRAILSFORD

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## POLITICAL PROCESSIONS

SIR,—Some time ago—when he was "seriously considering" the destruction of Fascism in Britain by the device of prohibiting the use of street loud speakers for all parties—I commented in your columns on the Home Secretary's remarkable inability to distinguish between cause and effect. This failing has again been demonstrated by his ban on all political processions in London for three months, on the ground that a highly provocative Fascist procession in the East End resulted in inevitable disorder.

Mr. Ede, in the House of Commons (March 21st, 1949), rightly said that he has two public duties to perform: "The first is to preserve order, and the second is to maintain the traditional liberties of the subject." One would have thought that the best way of performing these duties would be by prohibiting those processions which might reasonably be expected to give rise to disorder—and very little else—and leaving the others alone. It is impossible to understand how either of his objects is attained by including in his edict processions—such as, presumably, those of May Day—where there have never been and are never likely to be any disorders. In doing this he secures neither object; he is not preventing disorder as, *ex hypothesi*, in such cases there is none to be feared, and he is clearly not preserving the liberties of the subject.

Our modern St. George seems to think that to kill the dragon it is first necessary to slay the damsel in distress and thereby do the dragon's work for him; this may be a tribute to his neutrality but scarcely to his logic.

O. H. PARSONS

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Piccadilly, W.1.

## HERZL'S ZIONISM

SIR,—I trust that you will permit me, as a Zionist from the days of Herzl, to protest against Mr. Crossman's statement, in his review of Dr. Weizmann's autobiography, that Dr. Weizmann "broke Herzl's brand of snob Zionism, with its grandiose schemes for getting the Great Powers to do all the work." "Snob Zionism" is an offensive expression, which lacks even the tiniest particle of justification and is an utterly undeserved slur upon the memory of the founder of political Zionism, whose creative achievements formed the indispensable foundations upon which his successors built. For had it not been for the Zionist Organisation and its institutions, which Herzl established, and the stimulus that he gave to the Jewish national movement throughout the world, there would have been no Jewish National Home and no State of Israel.

Herzl never propounded or pursued "schemes for getting the Great Powers to do all the work." His attempts to enlist the sympathy of Great Powers in favour of a project for an autonomous Jewish settlement in Palestine were exactly on a par with the steps taken several years later by Dr. Weizmann and Nahum Sokalow to obtain the approval of the Governments of the United States, France and Italy, for the Balfour Declaration. His failure was due simply to the fact that his endeavours, made nearly fifty years ago, were premature; but that his course of policy was the best at the time was proved by the fact that the leaders who followed him were unable to bring about any improvement in the political situation of Zionism during the ten years from his death until the outbreak of war. The Balfour Declaration was a product of the First World War, and without that war no Zionist leader was likely to have attained what Herzl failed to achieve.

29 Pattison Road, N.W.2.

ISRAEL COHEN

## THE LEWIS PARTNERSHIP

SIR,—Mr. C. H. Rolph, in his review for you of my book *Partnership for All*, complains that "it omits the really vital figures that would show what Partnership Benefit the employees in fact receive."

Chapter 15 (headed "Results up to 1948") tries to answer this question. But in truth there is no really satisfactory middle course between two extremes. One is to say simply that in no event can the owners of the capital get more than a rate of interest that, being moderate and fixed, has also to be cumulative and of which the average on our present eleven millions is 4.36 per cent, and that all other earnings must go either to reserve or else in one way or another, sooner or later, to our workers. Perhaps I should mention here that the four highest-paid of my colleagues and I are drawing at present about five farthings a day on each of the Partnership's 11,500 (or thereabouts) members for our share in the management of their business with its present turnover of about twenty million pounds a year.

The other extreme would cover many pages whereon would have to be set out year by year the rapid and irregular growth of our business and certain major variable factors in our earnings. Our Partners would have to be classified not only to age and sex but to their widely varying functions and qualifications. The pay-sheet (now three million a year), the free insurance against exceptional need (no record for the early years, but I imagine now, in all, well into six figures), the various amenities (sports clubs, music, theatricals, dancing and so forth, now far into six figures), the pension fund (now just over a million) and the Partnership Benefit (now in all something over a third of a million) would all have to be shown as parts of a single entity, for obviously the significance of the figures of any one of these must depend upon the others.

Mr. Rolph is mistaken in saying that I see this particular experimental organisation "as an improvement on Robert Owen." I do not know enough of Owen's work to have any such opinion but I have a vague impression that it was absolutely first-rate and that his failure was due to a quite separate cause and was proportionately lamentable.

To Mr. Rolph this partnership seems "a patriarchal autocracy." As I have spent my life in endeavouring to make it as much as possible of a democracy, I should be very grateful to Mr. Rolph if he would help me by sending to me or to our *Gazette* any constructive suggestions.

The present position is that, in addition to absolute freedom of speech secured by free publication of anonymous communications, we have a Council of rather over a hundred members, of whom at least two-thirds are elected each year by secret ballot of the whole Partnership. This Council's great and growing power includes unlimited right of inquiry, criticism and suggestion. At this moment they are stirring up an ants' nest by considering whether membership of our partnership should be available to overt and crypto-Communists. The Council nominate five of the twelve directors of our principal Board. The Council fixed our minimum wage and our family allowances and have absolute control of many thousands of pounds placed at their disposal for help in hard cases. To the extent of this fund they can make any leaving-gift they think fit to any outgoing Partner.

Mr. Rolph's apparent disapproval of "belief in the power of written words" seems to be a matter, Sir, for you rather than for me.

J. SPEDAN LEWIS

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## THE CHURCH IN BULGARIA

SIR,—The Bulgarian Press Attaché challenges me to give an example of religious persecution in Bulgaria. The new Communist law, "to guarantee freedom of religion," just passed by the Dimitrov Government in Sofia, makes all Christian churches (Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant), as well as all synagogues and mosques, mere branches of the State administration, their respective Governing Boards being responsible only to the Communist Minister for Religion (Article 9). The Minister can alter Church statutes (Art. 32), stop the distribution of Church addressess, appeals, etc. (Art. 16), dismiss any priest, pastor or rabbi who criticises Communist regulations (Art. 13) and send to penal servitude all churchmen who speak or write against Communist policy (Art. 30). Furthermore, the Bulgarian churches are not even allowed to correspond with religious bodies or church institutions abroad, unless authorised to do so by the Minister (Art. 24). Art. 19 states: "The State administration, or any organ of the State, cannot be mentioned in any religious service or address except in phrases and sentences authorized by the Minister." This makes Communist propaganda obligatory for all churches, synagogues and mosques, as they all have to mention regularly, in prayers, addresses, etc., the State administration and its organs.

If the Bulgarian Press Attaché can believe that this Communist law is not an example of religious persecution, he can, in the words of Wellington, believe anything, including the amazing Communist assertion that the former Bulgarian Exarch Stephan was dismissed from his post and interned in the mountain village of Karlovo for reasons of health!

London, W.2. MICHAEL PADEV

## "WHITE WASHINGTON"

SIR,—I have just seen Mr. MacKenzie's article, "White Washington," in your issue of February 12, and hasten to thank him for saying that decent Americans are ashamed of the segregation of Negroes in their nation's capital. We are more than ashamed; decent Southerners as well as Northerners are working constantly to establish Civil Rights in the United States and to get rid of the segregation policies which are the worst result of our Civil War. Our British friends should be told, moreover, that when the Washington Daughters of the American Revolution refused the use of their Constitution Hall to Marion Anderson, Mrs. Roosevelt promptly invited her to sing in the White House to a distinguished company, and other liberals arranged for her to sing to an audience of 6,000 gathered in front of the Lincoln Memorial. WINIFRED SMITH

Vassar College, N.Y.

## ARTIST, CRITIC, PUBLIC

SIR,—Mr. Mortimer's views on this subject are most interesting—rich with suggestion and challenge. May I take up one of the most crucial of the issues raised?

According to Mr. Mortimer, no rules of art are any longer recognised by artist or critic, indeed never have been recognised. "Every criterion . . . has been exploded." This is indeed candid; it is far more, it is given and repeated as a dogmatic statement of fact (a latter-day achievement which Mr. Mortimer evidently heartily approves). Yet, if this attitude of negation has infected the whole field of art, it is no wonder that doubt and chaos, as to effort and direction, vitiate the academies (which have uneasily surrendered faith even in the academic), and nine-tenths of the world of art to-day. Why does Mr. Mortimer deliberately confuse scientific, or anatomical, accuracy (the only "instance" he gives) with the permanent principles underlying art—the principles of mass, weight, proportion, rhythm, infinity, colour—the principles which Michael Angelo, Leonardo, Piero della Francesca, Titian, Cezanne, Braque and Picasso use? Are we, on the authority of Mr. Mortimer, to regard as exploded nonsense the dictum of Picasso that "All art of all time rests on the same principles"?

While Mr. Mortimer might (like his instance of anatomy) justly argue that the great colourists are not scientifically faithful to visual nature, does this mean that they used no laws of colour! Do let us keep distinct Science (the science of nature) and Aesthetics (the science of art). In any case, however important individual sensitivity may be, it has proved a dismal failure in enlightening the student and layman.

I regret raising this criticism of an expression of views otherwise so admirable: I only do so as the fallacy specified is such a vital one.

Farnham, Surrey. OTWAY MCCANNELL

## QUAKER MIRACLES

SIR,—In his letter published in your issue of March 19, Mr. Ormerod Greenwood disputes my statement that the Quakers changed after 1660, arguing that they were in fact both occasionally respectable before and occasionally eccentric after that date.

These facts I should not deny, nor should I maintain that there was any positive act of second foundation; but I would maintain that the respectable tradition triumphed in general over the eccentric after 1660, and that this triumph was made possible by the failure of the Puritan Revolution as a social revolution, and the consequent abandonment by the Quakers of those radical social demands which they had shared with the other sects. The new form of Quakerism I associated with Penn, as the prophet of the second generation, but not exclusively, nor at the expense of Fox; indeed, I made it clear that Fox also changed in this direction in his later years.

Finally, Blake's comment is not relevant. I suggested that the *details* of Fox's miracles are unimportant. Mr. Greenwood writes as if I had stated that the *fact* of such miracles was unimportant. This I did not do and do not believe.

H. R. TREVOR-ROPER

## THE GENIUS OF IBSEN

SIR,—Those like Critic who know the Swedes and Danes intimately may find it hard to imagine Ibsen one or the other, but in the grim side-whiskered gentleman in the stove-pipe hat and tight frock coat whose effigy seems to frown on the cafés concerts of Oslo, it is as difficult to imagine the operation of the wild mountain spirit as conceived, say, by Wordsworth or Shelley. Ibsen's plays might very well have been written by an Englishman or an American. The setting of *The Doll's House*, *Ghosts* and the *Pillars of Society*, with a change in the characters' names, might be transferred to Birmingham or Philadelphia without any loss of their significance. Ibsen's greatness lies precisely in his casting off the swaddling clothes of a petty nationality and in his addressing himself to the problems of European society at large.

And has not the sea, rather than the mountain, influenced Norwegian life and character?

STEPHEN ANDERSON

43A Gunterstone Rd., W.14.

## MORE WORLD'S TO CONQUER

SIR,—It is surprising to find Mr. Worsley falling into the vulgar error of supposing Alexander conquered the "whole of the then known world." The Western Mediterranean remained unmolested. It was of course well known, as witness the early Greek colonisation of Southern Italy, etc. Aristotle remarks on the heavy yield from the tin mines of Spain (Tartessus).

An advance in this direction would have brought Macedonia into conflict with Carthage and probably Rome.

If indeed Alexander wept, it must have been because so much remained unaccomplished.

P. J. LANE

3 Studley Grange Rd., Hanwell.

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Brewers wish and intend to resume this effort as soon as conditions permit. The licensed houses of the future will not necessarily be large but their purpose will be the traditional purpose of our inns : to provide means of recreation in many different forms (food and drink, games and, where possible, music, plays and other cultural activities) and to serve as social centres as stimulating or as quiet and comfortable as the company themselves desire.

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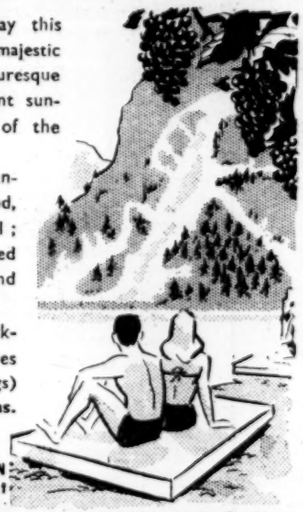

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# BOOKS IN GENERAL

EVER since he recovered from Coburg the letters written by the Prince Consort to his brother Duke Ernst of Saxe-Coburg, Mr. Bolitho, in a succession of books, has constituted himself almost official biographer to Queen Victoria and her family. The position has been no sinecure: the documentation of the Victorian age has become stupendous. When Strachey's *Queen Victoria* appeared in 1921 only the earlier letters of the Queen were known to the public, and as he himself remarked: "With Albert's death a veil descends." That veil has since been lifted with a vengeance. Six more thick volumes of the Queen's letters, from 1861 to her death, now stand on the shelf. The official biographer has had enough: with Bolitho's Farewell to his Queen,* the culmination of 20 years' hard labour, he is resigning his place.

Has the picture changed since Strachey's day? Not in any of the essentials. Victoria's self-centred character was as refractory to modification as a block of granite. During the latter part of her reign her regal spirit showed signs of weathering, but no trace of softness or decay. She preserved her toughness and integrity to the last. What external circumstance could affect her? After all, a throne makes a fairly comfortable seat for an egotist. And, besides the natural advantages of that situation, she possessed other facilities for surmounting the difficulties of life without anxiety. Her thoughts were never troubled with any need for consistency; and this untrammelled state of mind, although it perturbed her Ministers until they got used to it, delighted her subjects with its air of complete sincerity. Furthermore, the violence of her feelings—and she seemed almost incapable of any feeling less than violent—was never bottled up; and the emotional discharge in an emphatic vocabulary afforded instant relief. "The Queen talks all out," as Lady Lyttleton remarked. The process is vulgarly known as "blowing off steam"—the Queen's volubility was her safety valve.

The characteristic story Mr. Bolitho tells of Victoria's behaviour on hearing of the death of her old enemy Gladstone illustrates the benign influence of these alarming explosions. The Queen was sitting with one of her ladies-in-waiting, who was acting as secretary, when the news came. The lady said, "I suppose, Ma'am, that you will write to Mrs. Gladstone." The Queen answered, "No. I did not like the man. How can I say I am sorry when I am not?" She had to say exactly what she felt—and then she felt better. After that outburst she felt able to dictate the letter of condolence.

Such placid sequels to her pugnacious pronouncements may have misled the Queen's biographers. They often credit her with a saving streak of common sense, a tactful submission to the inevitable, in her many conflicts with her advisers. Certainly the feebleness of this formidable personage in getting her own way with her Ministers requires explanation. She "never could take Mr. Gladstone as my Minister again"—and she took him again, and again, and again. It was "impossible" for her to send for Lord Rosebery—and it proved quite possible and even advantageous. She telegraphed to the Cabinet: "General Gordon is in danger: you are bound to try to save him"—and Gordon was left to his fate. She objected to handing Heligoland over to Germany—and she signed the treaty of cession. She threatened to abdicate—and no one believed her. In Albert's day things were very different: the Royal Prerogative steadily encroached in State affairs and had to be reckoned with. But then Albert was a pertinacious, unemotional man, with a fixed policy at the back of his mind. When Albert had decided that Lord Palmerston was unfit to conduct Foreign Affairs, eventually it was Palmerston who had to give way. With the Queen her passionate resistance to whatever she disliked often spent itself in mere verbiage, leaving her more or less indifferent to the actual effect of her animosity. The Queen "*won't* be a machine" she once declared. But that is precisely what she became—a talking machine. When her Ministers pressed the button, there were a few protesting screeches as the turntable began to revolve; and then she slipped into her groove and dutifully recorded her "Approved" to every item on the calendar.

Mr. Bolitho is a learned but cautious biographer. He prefers to let the facts speak for themselves rather than pick his way over the quicksands of psychological interpretation. He will follow the Strachey path in that direction as far as it goes, but not a step further. Yet the curious particulars he has collected about the domestic life of the Royal Family offer a tempting field for many a speculation. For instance, the Duke of Kent's shabby treatment of his mistress, Madame de St. Laurent; the Queen's quarrel with her mother, the Duchess of Kent, and subsequent reconciliation; her passionate adoration for her governess Lehzen, which was transmuted by Albert into passionate antagonism; and the Hanoverian jealousy of the heir to the throne which made Edward VII's childhood a nightmare, are all subjects on which Mr. Bolitho is full of information, if not of enlightenment. Indeed, it is odd to see him trying to throw a coat of whitewash over the scallywag Duke of Kent, whom his contemporaries regarded as "the greatest rascal that ever went unhung."

But one of Mr. Bolitho's discoveries, concerning the Queen's well-known morbid fascination with death, deserves special notice. We knew that she surrounded herself with busts of Albert and regularly visited his tomb; that she had his evening clothes always laid out for him, as if he might return any day to wear them; and that his photograph was the only solace to her widowed bed. But how many knew that the macabre photograph she chose to sleep under for forty years was a head and shoulders of her husband lying dead!

The strange case of the discouraged, but never disillusioned prig remains a mystery. From the age of 13, when his Uncle Leopold complacently observed "externally he possesses all that pleases the sex," Prince Albert was being groomed to capture the throne of England. The Coburgs played an unorthodox game of international chess: they won by mating Queens. Leopold himself was out of luck with Princess Charlotte, who died on his hands; but he picked up £50,000 a year from the Exchequer and the throne of Belgium as a consolation prize. A generation later the family were more successful: the Queens of England and Portugal fell into their laps.

Albert's sole motive in marrying Victoria was Coburg ambition: he was not in the least in love with her. "God help me!" he wrote to his grandmother three hours before the wedding. But marriage was only the first step. To reach the real seat of power he had to dominate the Queen, not just to embrace her. At the end of four years of woman-taming he could report to his brother: "Victoria has greatly improved and has become very reasonable and good-natured." So there he was at the apex of his ambition, a monarch at the age of 24. With a doting wife, submissive children and respectful Ministers all coming to heel; with his appreciation of music, his interest in science and the success of his Great Exhibition; with his tartans and his stags-horns, his Winterhalters and his Landseers, and, above all, with his apple-pie conscience—"I have absolutely nothing to reproach myself with"—why wasn't he a happy man? In a touching letter to his daughter he compared himself to the donkey in Carisbrooke Castle who works in a treadmill to wind up the water but would rather munch thistles outside. Would it have been better, with no thistles within reach, to have flung up his heels out of devilment? Long, long ago, before Stockmar and Uncle Leopold got hold of the reins, as a young boy he had once thrown sulphuric acid on the floor of a theatre to frighten the ladies of Coburg. What had become of that little scapegrace? At any rate, Albert, at the height of his glory, always wistfully referred to his childhood, before the donkey-work began, as "the happiest period of his life."

In vain we ask another biographer† to reveal the secret of the Prince's unhappiness. The problem holds no perplexities for Mr. Fulford: it simply does not exist. In his view, both Mr. Bolitho and Lytton Strachey are gravely at fault in imagining that Albert suffered from anything more intriguing than a poor digestion, or that his weariness and despondency were anything but the natural consequence of overwork. How wholeheartedly Queen Victoria herself would have agreed with this comfortable diagnosis! She would have felt quite at home with Mr. Fulford. For this able writer is still ready to accept the complacent self-righteousness of the Victorians at their own valuation. The final paragraph of his book shall speak for itself:

> Rolling back the mists of sentiment and the clouds of eulogy which still perhaps hide the true Prince Consort, we, from the vantage-point of eighty years on, can see him as he was—the embodiment of character and goodness. At these qualities later generations may have tittered, may have sought to mock them (sic) as redolent of governesses and public-school masters, but the laughter they have raised has been somewhat half-hearted. The personality of the Prince was "shy to illumine" his virtues, but as he stands out more clearly from history they shine with a glowing grace which, in spite of the fustian of twentieth-century morality, compels alike our understanding and admiration.

This testimonial, handsome as it is, cannot claim to be original. Sentiments very similar to these—though in less sonorous prose—were voiced 70 years earlier by Theodore Martin, whose only vantage-point was the expectation of a knighthood. Had Mr. Fulford really chosen to take advantage of writing in the 20th century, he could have perceived Professor Freud standing at his shoulder—with pursed lips. "Embodiments of goodness" are cruelly dehydrated in recent textbooks of psychology. But it is not necessary to summon up the cumbersome artillery of psychoanalysis—those modern Long Toms, the Ego, the Super-Ego and the terrible Id—to demolish the legend of this Fairy Prince. In spite of our fustian morality, a handsome young man who chooses to marry a plain, impressionable girl for her money and rank, a father who goes in for whipping his young son because the boy does not do him credit, a rich man with £30,000 a year always ready to support a good cause with a six-page memorandum rather than a cheque, none of these even to-day will pass as a copybook hero.

There is no denying, however, that Albert had character—the determined character of an anaconda with a healthy appetite confronted by a rather large goat. With patience and persistence

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* *The Reign of Queen Victoria.* By Hector Bolitho. *Collins.* 16s.

† *The Prince Consort.* By Roger Fulford. *Macmillan.* 18s.

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**CHATTO AND WINDUS**

he was prepared to absorb the entire British Constitution into the monarchical system recommended by Stockmar and Uncle Leopold, gulp by gulp. It is interesting to note how far he had progressed before he died. In the first days of his marriage Victoria did not allow him to discuss politics even with her; by 1845 he had supplanted her on the throne; in 1847 he was appointing Bishops instead of the Prime Minister; in 1850 he said that he understood that, under the Constitution, the sovereign could not interfere with the Government or the management of Parliament, but he commented: "I differ completely from that doctrine"; and a year later he was giving Palmerston the sack; during the Crimean War he even tried his hand at strategy; and by 1860 he was headmaster of England, with the muttering of the under-masters in the Common Room of the Cabinet being secretly reported to him by the subservient Lord Granville. "If he had outlived some of our 'old stagers' he would have given us the blessings of absolute government" was Disraeli's flattering opinion; but the opinion is unreliable, as it was given to a devotee of autocracy, the Russian Ambassador. Albert the Good was not quite as good as all that. The English have a knack of dispensing with those particular blessings, as he would have found out.

RALPH PARTRIDGE

## THE DESERT

**Elegies for the Dead in Cyrenaica.** By HAMISH HENDERSON. *John Lehmann.* 6s.
**The Traveller has Regrets.** By G. S. FRASER. *Harvill Press.* 8s. 6d.

The most interesting poems written during, or because of, the war were those born in the West African desert. There may be exceptions; but anyone who has read much of this war poetry—more than seven hundred volumes were published—will hardly have escaped noticing the distinctive clarity and power of perhaps eight or a dozen poems, of which the desert is the subject. They form a little corps, quite different from anything else—the experience of straying over African sand seems to have liberated poetry. The simplicity of the scene, the sense of space, the presence of a manageable number of distinct objects—can one doubt these set the poet free? He had room to look about, and digest the qualities of objects: armour, particles of scrub, individuals on reconnaissance, an airliner overhead, a dead soldier on the sand, temples of older civilisations. The desert was like the stain of dye, with which a scientist colours a piece of matter before looking at it under the microscope. It allowed detail to stand out and take on a symbolic value. And there is nothing comparable to this desert symbolism except in Sidney Keyes's tremendous poem *The Wilderness* written before he had seen Africa. His strange and powerful mind enabled him to create his own desert.

Keyes is dead, and cannot now ever prove, what many believe, that he would have become one of the most impressive and original of English poets; an ouster of the half-thoughts and half-feelings, the paddling nostalgias and sentimentalities, which our overcrowded terrain seems to foster. But there are still reminding voices coming out of the African spaces. Now, there is Mr. Hamish Henderson, whose *Cyrenaica* has the desert's unmistakable signature. First, in their intense physical vividness the poems seem to bump and lurch and jerk across the desert, like jeeps. There are descriptive passages here, in which the well-spaced exactness of phrase and movement gives a shock of conviction. And the capacity for almost barbaric physical feeling—possibly helped by the fact that he is a Scot—has enabled Mr. Henderson to reproduce for us one essential experience which, by and large, the poets of this war have hushed up: I am thinking of the excitement of war, the thrill of battle. I suppose we wouldn't accept this experience now from a Brooke or a Grenfell. But read here *The Opening of an Offensive*, the account of the Scots' pipes screaming above all the noise of artillery, and see if you can dodge it:

> Is this all they will hear, this raucous apocalypse?
> The spheres knocking in the night of Heaven?
> The drummeling of overwhelming niagara?
> No! For I can hear it! Or is it? . . . tell
> me that I can hear it! Now—listen!
> Yes, hill and shieling
> sea-loch and island, hear it, the yell
> of your war-pipes, scaling sound's mountains
> guns, thunder drowning in their soaring swell!
> —The barrage gulfs them: they're gulfed
> in the clumbering guns,
> gulfed in gloom, gloom. Dumb is the
> blunderbass black—
> lost—gone in the anonymous cataract of noise.
> Now again! The shrill war-song: it flaunts
> aggression to the sullen desert. It mounts. Its scream
> tops the valkyrie, tops the colossal artillery.

In such passages—the whole of the very good poem *Seven Good Germans*, for example—Mr. Henderson is at his best, and very interesting. And there are passages where the immediate physical response fuses wholly with ideas, which the desert has inspired in him. But there is a danger inherent in this desert poetry, which I think Mr. Henderson doesn't yet quite avoid—a tendency to over-interpretation of ideas, which will probably not quite bear all the strains he puts on them. A lurking addiction to metaphysics is the corollary of our mediocre pragmatism; the influence of the desert is to release it almost too explosively, with a great scatter of excitement and confidence. Mr. Henderson could learn much I think, from the diffidence with which Mr. Eliot presents difficult ideas. And then he would probably soften some too-confident interpretation, or such a line as "With Mum so proud of her boys in uniform." But this is criticism of a still-developing poet, whose work already has real quality and power.

Mr. Fraser is a more mature poet, who tunnels patiently, and doesn't mind coming out into dull back-gardens. It's a different method of working through our British padding. He would rather be banal than dodge banality. The household properties in his poetry, carpet-slippers and soap-and-water, apples and muslin, are treated with an unusual directness—in the spirit of what they are worth to all sorts of average people, rather than of quizzical observation. There is an effort to grasp the simplicities of those middle reaches of behaviour and feeling, which now take up, and always will, a good deal of time and energy in human lives: an effort to defeat self-consciousness.

It follows from such effort, that Mr. Fraser often takes a very long time to get around to his point. Too long for poetry, one may feel; the method lacks magic. Its better effects may occur as single verses somewhere towards the middle of a long stretch of verses—verse 9 of the poem *To the Death That Is the Muse of Adolescence* (a characteristic tongue-twister), or verses 10 and 11 of *The Black Cherub*:

> But at night we may go down on our cold knees:
> "To-morrow, God, make me not a drunkard, please:
> But let me have the pleasure of being drunk,"
> And the contradiction has us, and we are sunk.
>
> Or, "Let my love be pure and gentle at last:
> And let it be cleansed from the stains and the
> pains of the past:
> And let the girl come easily to my bed"
> And the black cherub holds the hairs of our head.

The business of arriving at such perceptions, clever and satisfactory in themselves, is curiously suggestive of the novelist rather than the poet. Mr. Fraser seems at times like a very good novelist, almost a George Eliot, writing poetry; there are the novelist's sexual seriousness, his sense of personal predicament and moral dilemma; his balance, tolerance, detachment. Yet he is a poet, capable of fusing his gifts into a subtle and sound poetry, with strong fibre in it; as here, in the poem *Egypt*, and particularly in the *Letter From Asmara*, a most satisfactory and attractive poem. If at present there are too many echoes, and he seems not always to be quite himself, there are nevertheless hints of something more, in subtle delicacies of definition (see *Landscape*, the poem about poetry), and in one curiously convincing and moving image:

> Incredible wild things
> *Struggle like swans half-blind with snow*—

in which he tries to describe the secret processes of his own impulse to poetry.

GILES ROMILLY

## SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY

**The Foreign Policy of Soviet Russia. Volume II, 1936-1941.** By MAX BELOFF. *Oxford University Press.* 21s.

Foreign policy is one thing; diplomacy quite another. Policy implies motive and purpose; diplomacy executes policy. There is an enormous material for contemporary diplomatic history; the study of foreign policy has never been more difficult. Thus, the editors of the British documents on the first German war gave us the secret discussions which preceded action; the editor of the new series tells us that *res gestae* must satisfy us. Similarly the Bolsheviks discussed in public before they made the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk; there was no discussion of the Nazi-Soviet pact. We know the reasons for the founding of the Comintern; we can only guess at the motives for its dissolution. Mr. Beloff recognises this: "for very much of the history of Soviet foreign policy, we still lack the factual information necessary before we can proceed to an analysis of motives." But analysis of motives is only another way of describing foreign policy; and as one reads this painstaking compilation—useful, if a compilation can ever be useful—one wonders again and again whether it was necessary for Mr. Beloff to be so self-effacing.

The answer, no doubt, is that this method was inevitable in a book produced under the auspices of Chatham House. Mr. Beloff, with his lively mind and personal approach, has been overshadowed by the anonymous committee, demanding an impartial approach, a colourless tone, and a factual account. It would be unfair to blame Mr. Beloff for the defects of Chatham House. All the same the method is pernicious. The problem of the historian is to write a book which shall be both accurate and interesting; the problem is not solved by writing a book that is accurate. Professor Namier, too, has written a work of diplomatic history based solely on official sources; but he made this work a masterpiece by infusing it with his own understanding of events. No doubt Professor Namier would not have written a masterpiece if he had written under the auspices of Chatham House; but then he had the sense not to write under these auspices. The method in any case defeats itself. However painstaking and accurate the approach, there is bound to be selection and emphasis; the version of events must tend either to justify or to condemn the line of Soviet policy. Mr. Beloff's book, beneath its air of restraint, has an anti-Soviet slant. It repeatedly implies that the Soviet Government was cheating in its efforts at collaboration with the Western Powers, whether over Spain, Czechoslovakia, or in the summer of 1939. Therefore it follows that the Western Powers were justified in their failure to respond to the Soviet offers. Maybe they were; but it should have been pointed out that the experiment of taking the Soviet Government at its word was never made. Post-war experience is irrelevant. If you tell a man often enough that he is dishonest he will become so—just as the Americans will set out to dominate the world if the accusation is sufficiently repeated.

The tedious productions of Chatham House rest on the assumption that the public utterances of governments are valuable historical material. This makes things awkward when dealing with the Soviet record; for Soviet statesmen are smarter than any others at public argument. On paper the Soviet Government alone followed a sensible and honest course over Spain; and it

alone had nothing to be ashamed of in its dealings with Czechoslovakia. In 1939 the Soviet Government alone conducted negotiations with the Western Powers as though it meant them. Mr. Beloff obscures these points and leaves the impression that Soviet policy was as muddled as that of the Western Powers. It would have been more profitable to admit that the Soviet rulers have an unrivalled legal ingenuity, with which they put others in the wrong; but they have also an unrivalled capacity for arousing distrust in others—a reflection perhaps of the distrust which they feel themselves. The public record of Soviet diplomacy reveals little except these two characteristics. At the end one is as far from understanding Soviet policy. Something might be done by studying the theoretical papers of Communist economists and political scientists; after all the learned Soviet journals are all accessible in this country, and they are as important for Soviet policy as, say, the Jesuit manuals are for an understanding of the Counter-reformation. Everyone has now discovered this in relation to Professor Varga; and it is the current fashion to exaggerate his role. Mr. Beloff would have put the reader much more in his debt if he had attempted this analysis; and sooner or later someone will have to do it.

Mr. Beloff does not try to conceal the defects of the method imposed upon him by Chatham House. His final chapter on the principles of Soviet policy escapes from the drab pattern of the rest of the book; here he makes a valuable, though sketchy, essay in interpretation. He argues sharply against those who believe that Soviet policy is peculiarly Russian in either an imperialistic or a national sense. It is, he insists, essentially Marxist: "to try to comprehend the Soviet outlook and to dismiss the inevitability of the world proletarian revolution is as idle as to try to comprehend the outlook of medieval man and to dismiss the reality of the Last Judgment." Further, "one is at grips with a dual system of morality—what is permitted among the faithful in the service of the faith is morally reprehensible among the infidels." It follows from this that it is fruitless to discuss defects in international machinery, "for such machinery must logically involve the sacrifice of sovereignty to a partially non-Socialist organ which could not but be biased against the U.S.S.R." These are inconclusive, though sensible, generalisations. They should have been the starting-point for an analysis of Soviet foreign policy not its conclusion. Granted that the object of Soviet policy must always be the triumph of Socialism (Leninist variety), yet this object can be served broadly in one of two ways—by strengthening Socialism where it already exists or by weakening capitalism. The two ways are not mutually exclusive; still there has been emphasis sometimes on the one, sometimes on the other, and it should be possible, after thirty years experience, to reach some conclusions about the reasons for these changes of emphasis. After all, we should like nothing better than for the Russians to concentrate on improving the Soviet economic system; and if they had any sense they would realise that capitalism will dig its grave without any assistance from them. In fact American capitalism would be on the rocks now, if it were not for the armaments-boom for which Soviet policy has provided the excuse, and perhaps the justification.

There is an even more profitable line of inquiry which Mr. Beloff does not explore at all. Broadly speaking, foreign policy does not pursue conscious ends; it is shaped rather by impulses from within and without. With Soviet policy, as with any other, it should be possible to inquire—what are the forces which push it along? Maybe there is no evidence of the forces within—personal rivalries, technical fears, doctrinaire assumptions. But there is certainly evidence enough of the forces without. For instance—a simple question which has never been answered—why did Ribbentrop succeed in 1939 where the British and French negotiators (whoever they were) failed? The answer constantly suggested, though never openly stated, in Western books is Bolshevik wickedness; they preferred the bad to the good, Hitler to Chamberlain and Daladier. Yet the real answer is not far to seek. Or again how is it that the perfidious Bolsheviks have always kept their trade bargains (rather better at present than we have)? No one troubles to ask these questions, let alone answer them; for at bottom none of the statesmen of the Western world wish to solve the problem of how to get along with the Soviet Union. They prefer to insist that the Soviet statesmen must accept Western rules.

A. J. P. TAYLOR

## NEW NOVELS

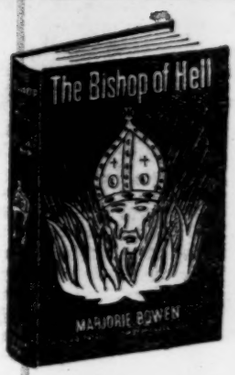
**Joy of Man's Desiring.** By JEAN GIONO. *Routledge.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

**Not into Clean Hands.** By LOUIS PAUWELS. *Allen & Unwin.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

**The Long Swim.** By RICHARD ANGELL. *Eyre & Spottiswoode.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

No attitude is harder to sustain than an integral pessimism; nothing is so hard to kill as hope. Anyone who has experienced intense happiness knows that a concomitant of that state, perhaps both the effect and the cause of it, is a vision of order, an apprehension of fitness. At certain rare moments there is an almost audible click as we suddenly take the place for which, it irresistibly seems to us, we were intended. Conversely acute unhappiness is accompanied by a devastating sense of confusion. Both the cause and the effect of our distress is the double conviction that we have lost something and that we have been lost by something. And so it might at first seem strange that the great majority of the writers whom we now respect appear to be more preoccupied with the negative state, more intent on describing the unilluminated than the visionary condition of the individual. It seems to me that the reason for this is twofold. In the first place we are far more familiar with unhappiness than with joy. Most of our lives are spent in a state of more or less confusion, a more or less conscious *égarement* from a path which becomes harder and harder to rediscover. The vision of joy and order leaves a poignant but an inarticulate memory behind it. The present confusion is there under the hand, bales and bales of solid material which we have only to unpack and arrange. No more than this is required to write a true and honourable, though ultimately an unrewarding, work of art. On the other hand the great pessimists have somehow contrived to create a dark vision out of their exile. This is achieved, I think, by an unusually acute sense of the alternative to the misery which they describe. The world is not tragic (or anything else) unless there is some apprehension of the pre-existent Eden, the attainable but hidden Kingdom of God. Rightly a sense of loss and confusion does imply the possibility of discovery and order. The Inferno is meaningless without the Paradiso.

But certain bold writers attempt a direct assault on the vision of order, either because their experience of it has been so intense that nothing else seems worth describing, or because they soberly believe that the writer's function is to do this. They take a great risk, for nothing in the world is so hard to describe as the joyful moment of illumination. The nature of our normal condition is to be surrounded and assaulted by an unlimited variety of sense impressions, and the normal, arduous function of the writer is to be busy selecting and discarding in the midst of them. His aim is to impose some kind of unity by fishing patiently in the waters of diversity. The mystical writers, on the other hand, are impatient of this process; they attempt to paint a portrait of unity itself, despising the diversity which conceals it. When they succeed, as in the Paradiso, as in sustained passages of *Paradise Lost* or in the great mystical writings of many religions, the result is such a divine illumination that nothing else seems worthy of our attention. But when they fail their fall is like Lucifer's, and we cannot forgive them their presumption.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THE BODLEY HEAD


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Jean Giono, it has seemed to me, is pre-eminently the novelist of our time who attempts to storm the crystal battlements, only to fall headlong from the very margin of them. *Que Ma Joie Demeure* (a far less pretentious title than the English one) was first published in 1935 and has now been ably translated by Katherine Clarke. The theme of this long book is a simple and exciting one. A stranger comes to visit a small community of peasant-farmers hidden away in the mountains of Haute-Provence. He is a kind of saviour or magician, bringing with him a simple message of love, and certain rather more complicated instructions about the communal organisation of rural life. Joy comes to the Ouvèze river and love triumphs in the hearts of all the people there. Gradually the whole community is transformed by joy and love, and then, more rapidly, tragedy returns. There is jealousy among the women for the body of the saviour; there is death and suicide; the saviour leaves, conscious of failure, to die himself. And yet, "He will come back," she said to herself, "I know he will." Like the painter at the end of *To the Lighthouse*, they have had their vision.

From this précis alone it is evident that Giono is not a naive writer. He does not, like certain simple-minded revivalists, believe that everything is really very easy, that if we decide to love each other the Kingdom of God will instantly be achieved. There is artifice in his book, in the healthy sense of the word. And yet it fails. In spite of an unfailing stream of lyrical passages which are intensely felt and magnificently written, in spite of the obvious integrity of his aims, the book fails because it wearies and finally disgusts us. There is something both florid and frenzied about this writer, a kind of determination to be writing always at the highest pitch of intensity, the throttle wide open and the choke extended. Because of this monotony of tone, this curious lack of discretion, the dramatic point of the book in which joy turns suddenly to tragedy is passed almost unnoticed. We hear the same thick, guttural voice, although it may be telling us something different. In fact my final conclusion was that this book should have been an epic poem and not a novel at all. The intensity of the tone demands a greater intensity of form than the novel can give.

M. Pauwels is another writer who has attempted to make a direct assault on what is virtually mystical material. His working-class hero allows a compromising love letter to fall into the hands of his wife, with the result that his whole family life is instantly destroyed. It is not destroyed by the wish or action of Jousselin's wife, but by the fact that this rather sordid incident somehow introduces the husband to the life of the spirit. "What I want to say," writes the author in his rather garrulous foreword, "is that blessedness does not fall into clean hands. It is poured slowly into hands which are bleeding from patient and formidable labours." The increasing remoteness of Jousselin from all the desires and patterns of everyday life is described in familiar Gidian terms, and the book ends with the hero's joyful indifference to the tragic death of his wife and child. M. Pauwels is an able writer, though quite lacking in Giono's sultry fire, and his story is very neatly told. But the theme was too ambitious. Jousselin's conversion remains a literary device, a good idea for a *book*. The subject might have been a set one, and no doubt M. Pauwels would then have been a likely candidate for the prize. But our incredulity is never stormed: Jousselin fails to stir even our indignation.

Finally there is Mr. Angell's pretentious and detestable little allegory. An American naval officer sets out to swim from his ship to a nearby Mediterranean island. He is swept away by the current and nearly drowned. "In the darkness of that fearful night," so the blurb has it, "his whole life—everything he has done, dreamed, experienced—passes through his soul. Imperceptibly this spiritual struggle comes to overshadow the purely physical one." There is, of course, nothing imperceptible in this loud, blatant little chunk of imitation Miller. It is written, incidentally, in that pronominal monstrosity, the self-addressed second person. "You don't feel anything really, do you? Your body is a machine you're riding. The wonderful one-hoss shay." This book illustrates the really repulsive effects of aiming high without any of the equipment, spiritual, intellectual or literary, for making the ascent.

PHILIP TOYNBEE

## IT STILL GOES ON

**Existentialism.** By PAUL FOULQUIÉ. *Dobson.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

**Dreadful Freedom.** By MARJORIE GRENE. *Chicago University Press: Cambridge University Press.* 15*s.*

**Existentialist Philosophies.** By EMMANUEL MOUNIER. *Rockliff.* 15*s.*

In this country, the commonest attitude taken up in public towards anything that passes under the name of Existentialism is still one of jocular hostility. This I find incomprehensible. I can understand that one may be bored with Existentialism, but it has become so obvious that the thing is not going to catch on here that I can see no cue for continued nervousness, either on the part of literary persons who may have felt that, if they did not strike a blow in good time, they would find themselves having to read philosophy, or on the part of philosophers apprehensive lest the English way of thought should be disturbed by something perilously close to life and Logical Positivism no longer seem smart in any drawing-room. The controversy, if controversy there still is, has become a wholly personal one which anybody, having carefully informed himself about what is at stake, may silently conduct at home or in the street. The only professional interests seriously menaced by a growth of existentialist attitudes among the populace would be, on the one hand, those of orgiastic demagogues and priests; and, on the other, those of statisticians, Communists, psychiatrists, certain kinds of biologist and, in general, all who trade on man's most popular alibi: that behaviour is subject to general laws and thus susceptible of determinate explanation and scientific prediction.

For it is, as M. Foulquié will tell you, all a matter of whether or not you believe in a human essence, whether, in fact, you believe, in any but a purely sentimental, novel-reader's manner of belief, that there exists an entity which can properly be called "human nature." By M. Foulquié, who believes that such an entity does exist, the problem is stated with exemplary beauty and lucidity in what are, however, abstract and therefore necessarily "essentialist" terms, for language itself is the most radical enemy of existential philosophy, and this is no doubt why existentialist philosophers so often seem to be the enemies of language. I cannot over-praise M. Foulquié's little book as a piece of popular, but not on that account inaccurate, philosophical exposition. Nevertheless, once he has seen the question so attractively raised, the reader must snap out of it, or he will be left, with M. Foulquié himself and, like Plato and Hegel, spellbound, in a trance of adoration for universals.

I do not know who M. Foulquié is. Mrs. Grene is a rugged American individualist and matriarch. She attended Heidegger's lectures and didn't like the man. She thinks Kierkegaard ought to have been spanked. And yet in many ways (and certainly for the advanced student) her book is the most useful of the three. For one thing, she seems to be the only Anglo-Saxon writing who ever studied under both Heidegger and Jaspers. For another, she has read Kierkegaard extensively, if not in Danish, at any rate in the complete German edition, and so is able to quote a good deal which, outside her book, is not available in English translation. Besides, in her disagreement with this and that existentialist, she is thoroughly existential herself and displays few of the arch, familiar postures of a pneumatised pure intelligence contentedly bumping itself against the metaphysical ceiling.

For all I know, M. Mounier's is a good book, too, but the translator, who is called Eric Blow, puts a great many impediments in the way of anyone ever getting to know it. (I ought to say that M. Foulquié's merits were admirably revealed by Kathleen Raine.) One might have forgiven Mr. Blow his ignorance of the relevant literature and of certain elementary differences between the English and French languages if he had not also written a preface with every fourth word in inverted commas and added a host of confusing footnotes. And what can be the point of lifting M. Mounier's bibliography into a translation designed for the English reader? I do not even ask that a translator should compile a bibliography of his own; and if the books listed exist only in French, let them stay as they are, or omit them. That Mr. Blow was not miles away from all works of reference is shown by some of his footnotes, which seem to have been copied straight out of a dictionary or modified slightly in the direction of inaccuracy. This ineptitude makes me so angry that I can hardly remember what I once thought about M. Mounier, unless it was that the trouble with these personalists (apart from their anomalous efforts to *organise* respect for the individual) is that, granted the uniqueness of each separate human personality, they still have to explain just why the unique should be considered more sacred or valuable than the common, though it is true that the machine-age to which personalists are so hostile has established a category known as "scarcity value," so that perhaps, after all, personalism is a theory of economics.

RAYNER HEPPENSTALL

## AN IMPOSSIBLE ESCAPE

**The Wooden Horse.** By ERIC WILLIAMS. *Collins.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

The variations between one war escape story and another seem few: the same little band of adventurers amaze by their skill, ingenuity and courage; the enemy, from war to war and prison to prison, varies little; there are huts and barbed wire, or an old castle fastness, to be cracked from the inside; and escape itself can hardly be achieved except in one of three ways—by disguise, by forcing wire or walls, or by tunnelling. These limits have imposed a tradition, and nearly all the well-known escapes show inspired calculation.

Mr. Williams's "wooden horse" was a vaulting-horse made from packing-case lids, standing four and a half feet high, and measuring at the base five feet by three. It had a pair of removable lifting bars by which four men could carry it at the corners. This object was borne out one morning from the huts and placed on open sandy ground within thirty feet of the barbed wire. The performance was repeated twice daily. Vaulting became, in all weathers a favourite sport; the guards would watch it for hours.

What they could not see, and never to the last suspected, was the *fifth man* carried inside the horse, which when set down provided him with shelter as he dug and tunnelled. After a couple of hours he would come up, the lid of the manhole would be meticulously replaced, and he and the twelve bags of sand he had scraped would be carried back into the huts. At the end of four months, a tunnel 110 feet long had been dug to a ditch outside the camp, and through this Mr. Williams and two companions crawled one night to freedom. They divided, two and one, and all three found their way to Denmark and England. To make good one's escape is the all but impossible second phase, when planning and toiling over months and inches give way to improvisation in split seconds. Mr. Williams and his companions were the only British officers ever to escape successfully from this particular camp, Stalag Luft III, and needless to say, every incident and detail of *The Wooden Horse* is fascinating. So remarkable an adventure could hardly fail to produce a remarkable book.

If in telling his story, Mr. Williams has made a mistake, it is this. He has not been content with plain narrative, but has filled out descriptions, and conversations, as though he were writing a

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novel. No doubt, at this time and distance, the need to recreate grew imperative, and Mr. Williams manages it uncommonly well. But still the result has been to damp excitement without any compensating emotional gain. Better narratives were written during the war and better novels will come of it in time. *The Wooden Horse*, with its extraordinary chain of events, falls decently enough halfway.

G. W. STONIER

## AN INDIAN RIDE

**At Freedom's Door.** By MALCOLM LYALL DARLING. *Oxford University Press.* 21s.

Even the most casual visitor to India must be struck by the complexity of almost every Indian issue and must feel at times that there is no way out from these endless vicious circles and dilemmas; the answers so readily offered by politicians will only make the questions still more unanswerable. The country is full of Utopians, and the more sweeping their generalisations the weaker the evidence submitted. The European visitor who spends most of his time in the cities and can converse with the citizens only in English, should always remember that the greater part of India is closed to him; the salon Communists of Calcutta may talk fluently to him about the Village, but few of them have spent much time in any of the sub-continent's 650,000 villages. The visitor who drives through the country during the day may often wonder indeed where the villages and villagers exist, for many of the former are built away from the roads, while the latter get astonishingly lost in the landscape; it is at dusk when the streams of home-going peasants converge from every quarter that one is forcibly reminded that this land is populated. Populated! But these millions we have heard so much about and whom we now glimpse in the gloaming, remain for us figures in a frieze, as beautiful perhaps as the Elgin marbles but just as difficult to talk to. Yet there are Englishmen who can talk to them and—what is more important—make them talk. Most of the Englishmen who have the experience to do this and to sift out fact from fantasy or flattery come from the I.C.S.; sympathy with Indian nationalism should not make us forget that many members of this remarkable service have been human as well as efficient, and have achieved, what is difficult in any country, an understanding of the peasantry. Such an Englishman is Sir Malcolm Darling, who at the age of sixty-six, and having spent forty-two years in India, rode on horseback from Peshawar on the North-West Frontier to Jubbulpore in the Central Provinces in no official capacity, but purely to learn how things were going.

This fact-collecting crusade took place from November, 1946, till March, 1947, during that uneasy interim period which ended so much sooner than most people expected. That Sir Malcolm travelled by horse was not romantic archaism, though he obviously relished the romantic aspect of it; the motor car, as he points out, can reach only a minority of villages, and these it will pass through too quickly. He even attributes the decline in administration partly to the new methods of transport:

> Again and again we were waylaid . . . by groups of peasants in manifest distress and with little chance, it seemed, of gaining the ear of authority. Not so had it been when officials perforce rode their daily marches and pitched their tents in the remotest villages. Change came with the advent of motor and lorry and was accelerated by the political developments which followed the first war . . . Throughout the tour one had the feeling of an administration in only the loosest touch with the people and served by officials, many of whom, but not all [a qualification typical of this ex-official's fair-mindedness], paid far more attention to the demands of Government than to the needs of the people.

Sir Malcolm, being primarily interested in how the peasants live, how much money they make and what they get to eat, is too much concerned with detail to speak with a journalist's facile assurance—the details are far too prickly—but he is no defeatist. He welcomes Pandit Nehru's pronouncement that "we are more interested in the peasant than in any other group of human beings," and considers that this attitude of Government "might be the beginning of a new era for the Indian peasant. *But* [italics mine] . . . *the object must not be quick results.* That way lies disappointment . . ." The statistics of India's agricultural output *and* of India's birthrate make this judgment unassailable; the great value of a book like Sir Malcolm's is that it translates such statistics into terms of human groups and individuals.

Sir Malcolm's literary style is undistinguished. He is incapable of describing sunrise or sunset, though he clearly was impressed time and again by these two regular transformation scenes which in some parts of the country give one one's only chance of really seeing the landscape. He has the vocabulary and innocent tricks of an old-fashioned aunt—his horse is "fresh as a rose," and his truck is rescued from "a watery grave"—but he does get down on paper what he went into the wilderness to see. His book is a parade of living persons: the Muslim Leaguer who says "I am only a follower; whatever the League does is right"; the soldier returned from a German prison camp whose chief demand is for a ration system like those of France and Germany; the modernising Muslims who, nevertheless, argue for purdah; the sweepers whose landlord precludes them from the lowest step of his verandah while their fellow untouchables, the tanners, may go up the steps but not on the verandah itself. It is a cavalcade of poverty, ignorance, fatalism—and endearingness. And Sir Malcolm is too old a hand to generalise rashly. He will not admit that Indian villages are uniformly squalid or that sadhus are uniformly phoney. And, while he has a specially soft spot for the Punjab, he is typical of the I.C.S. at its best in his avoidance of prejudice; it is only too easy for an Englishman in India to accept one race or region or community and write off the rest as impossible. Sir Malcolm, though recognising Pakistan as an accomplished fact, has his doubts about the two-nation theory since many of his own observations conflict with it:

> We met Muslims who for generations had their genealogies kept and horoscopes cast by Brahmins, and passed villages owned by Muslim and Sikh, or by Hindu and Muslim, sprung from a common ancestor, and we even came across one village where Hindu, Muslim and Sikh were of the same tribe.

His villainies and his virtues are all of them concrete, and it is really very refreshing, after reading so many slogan-mongers, to hear someone mention "the humanising influence of water." To sum up, he is a keen observer, and he thinks for himself, but he is no axe-grinder. Many writers have said that the heart of Indian politics (or of all politics) is economics; Sir Malcolm would probably agree but, instead of the word "economics," he prefers to use the word "peasant," and to him it is more than a word.

LOUIS MACNEICE

## THE VALIANT TROOPER

**Life Interests.** By DOUGLAS GOLDRING. *Macdonald.* 12s. 6d.

"Dog does not eat dog," said Ford Madox Hueffer, summing up the ethics of Edwardian book-reviewing. "One doesn't crab another fellow's benefit." I do not know whether Mr. Goldring's quotation from his old chief on the *English Review* was meant as a hint to his own reviewers; but, really, nobody could want to crab his all round display. At the end of a decade in which we have grown to look back with unrationed nostalgia to the great sherries and old ports, the large gardenias and Havana-Havanas of an almost legendary past, even to invest our own suburban youth with a Sitwellian glamour, it is good to meet one who has known those days, and has something to say in favour of ours: someone whose sympathies, enthusiasms and hatreds are as generous as the bouquet of the wines he praises, and whose fidelity to the "Gentleman tradition" has brought him vociferously onto the side of popular causes. Mr. Goldring's opinions are, perhaps, often inconsistent, but they have an amateur robustness which our specialist-infested era decidedly lacks. Once upon a time the Gentlemen invariably beat the Players.

*Life Interests* is a collection of writings on a variety of subjects, dated anywhere between 1910 and the present day. Some of it appears to be the "left-overs" of his *Nineteen Twenties*. His first section, devoted to the poet Flecker, tells us nothing very new, though it does remind us how much finer a poem "Brumana" is than the average bric-à-brac it is sandwiched with in school anthologies. D. H. Lawrence he presents more vividly, coming down strongly on the side of his early novels against his late, and Violet Hunt appears again, though he has given her a book to herself in *South Lodge*. There is also a small and most engaging portrait of Powys Mathers, 'looing like a benign Chinese mandarin', against a background of Belgian dunes.

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Southend, and "A Cockney Pilgrimage," which is often in danger of degenerating into a topographical pub-crawl, that give us the most authentic Goldring; these and the more nostalgic "Timely Inn," a paean in praise of the four ale bar written in Nice and containing a magnificent doxology of pub names, beginning: "The Green Man," "The World's End," "The Valiant Trooper." But his antipathies too are characteristic of the man. They have something of the broad Chestertonian sweep of scorn about them, which is often more devastating than the crueller but better placed stabs of such modern practitioners in hate as Mr. Evelyn Waugh. Here his attack on the "standard English governing class Committee" pillories that studiously "non-political" approach which has kept so many tracts of our public life safe for privilege, while "The Blood Combine" bludgeons a type of vested interest in literary journalism which has grown weaker in the twenty seven years since it was written.

Mr. Goldring, in fact, makes engaging reading, and it is perhaps invidious to try to fit so live and human a character into his age and class; for he belongs before the days of Identity cards and National Insurance numbers. His is a Radicalism that has always stood for unpopular causes, an egalitarianism of the pub, the club, and the windy top of a General omnibus. He was at home at a Bloomsbury party in the Twenties, given perhaps to greet some expatriate writer or artist, en route from one cheap little place on the Italian riviera to another and cheaper in Majorca, or Madeira, or on the Cornish coast; and he is equally at home in the West Country villages from which he sprang and in the decaying quarters of London, that yield up their relics of Georgian architecture to his discerning eye.

He is an original, a character, clubbable but unorganisable, with a sound literary taste yet strangely obtuse towards novelty, a bohemian with a sense of social obligation, a socialist with a feeling for tradition. Where do such anomalies among succeeding generations find a home? One suspects that the more short-sighted of them, maybe, devote their energies to a vituperative rearguard action against form-filling and government regulations; some may still be airing their prejudices at the diminished parties or over the thin Bitter of the Forties, but steadily, I am afraid, they are being squeezed out by a tidier-minded, more departmentalized breed, to whom I recommend Mr. Goldring's book as an entertaining and endearing example of pre-Fabian disorder.

J. M. COHEN

## AN ENGLISH TOUR

**The Journeys of Celia Fiennes.** Preface by G. M. TREVELYAN. Edited by CHRISTOPHER MORRIS. *Cresset Press.* 9*s.* 6*d.*

To secure a shred of immortality a writer should either be a good artist or altogether without art. Celia Fiennes, a grand-daughter of the first Viscount Saye and Sele, travelled England on horseback between 1685 and the early years of Queen Anne. Even for that period her spelling was wild; she could not punctuate or order her thoughts. Yet the detailed, unemotional account that she wrote of all that had interested her on her journeys is now of great value to social and economic historians and offers to everyone a picture of pre-industrial England that is genuine and intimate. This revised second edition of the Cresset Library publication of her journals is to be warmly welcomed.

Perhaps his attentive devotion as her editor has made Mr. Morris too generous to his heroine as a woman. He speaks of her charm and vitality, of her eager, child-like outlook and of the sometimes all-but-moving qualities of her style. Her deplorable taste in the fine arts is described as "unsophisticated." Incidentally, since Mr. Morris has thanked another reviewer for pointing out an error, it may be noticed that the phrase about sunshine and the singing of birds quoted as evidence of the moving power of her style, refers not to Blackstone Edge but to her father's reminiscences of the Alps.

The fact that Celia Fiennes chose to ride the rough roads of her country as she did shows an energy and enterprise that must spring from something much more remarkable than a desire either to stay with the innumerable relations and acquaintances who lived in good houses up and down the country, or to physic herself with the unpleasant waters of the "spaws" that she visited so assiduously. But apart from this adventurous curiosity it is possible to see her as a conventional, unimaginative woman with the ordinary tastes and prejudices of her class, and a prudery and censoriousness that do not now appear more lovable because they were the natural result of a puritanical upbringing.

It is England and not Celia Fiennes that is irresistible. An England where locality was still so strongly marked that a journey of a hundred miles could command more diversity of food, customs, men and manufactures than need be expected of a thousand miles today. Above all the journals create an image of a land with a lovely balance of town and country, just achieved and soon to be lost. The old towns were still there serving the needs of the countryside, a little despicable, perhaps, for their wood-framed buildings and narrow ways; the new ones were just growing in the service of trade—Manchester, Liverpool, Newcastle—a source of pride with their fine stone and brick houses, public buildings, well-pitched streets and piped water supply. This confidence in her age is what most startles us today; for we have never known the pleasure of wandering the country confident that new things will always seem better than old ones.

Celia Fiennes was quite untouched by any romantic notions; the mountains of the Lakes she viewed with interest but on the whole with disapproval. She saw England near the beginning of a period of reason, comeliness and prosperity. The intellectual roots of the industrial revolution were already established and the benefits of foreign trade making themselves felt, but there was no intimation of the blackened ugliness that was soon to rise from this pleasant land, any more than it could be foreseen that romanticism would shatter the smooth contours of the ideal of reason.

JACQUETTA HAWKES

## GRAMOPHONE NOTES

**Symphonies.** SCHUBERT: *Sixth in C major* (LSO/Krips. AK2119-22). An outstandingly brilliant issue, far better recorded than the Beecham set (HMV). Josef Krips cannot make more of the thin and fussy Finale than is there, but his conduct of the whole work makes us hear it as though for the first time. Everything in the score comes out as clean as a whistle and the tone is never strained. STRAVINSKY: *Symphony of Psalms* (LPO and Choir/Ansermet. AK-1753-5). Hardly, if at all, less successful than the foregoing. The orchestral part, with its bare wind parts and its total absence of violins and violas, favours recording; but the choral writing could easily sound lumpy and monotonous. In fact, the balance is so good that the whole texture comes through to admiration: steady, gentle, weighty and grave. This is one of Stravinsky's most rewarding works, because there is real feeling behind it.

**Concertos.** MENDELSSOHN: *No. 1 for Piano in G major* (Moura Lympany/Philharmonia/Kubelik. C3838-9). Close comparison with the Decca set leads me to a conclusion which will be thought tiresome, but I can't help it. The new set has great merits: the brilliance and definition are wonderful, and the piano tone is much rounder than Decca ever seem able to produce. In the Andante Miss Lympany plays with an evenness and tranquillity not achieved by Eileen Joyce (Decca), whose figuration smothers the melody in the orchestra. On the other hand, the new performance takes the first movement at break-neck speed, which makes it sound like a Finale; and the recording is on the rowdy side. A clean-cut decision seems impossible; but since the Andante is musically by far the most important movement, readers will perhaps prefer the new set. GEMINIANI: *Concerto Grosso in C min.* Op. 2, No. 2 (Boyd Neel String Orch, K2124). A concise and attractive product of this eighteenth-century composer's voluminous but very sober muse. A dignified, mellifluous performance. Excellent string tone.

**Miscellaneous Orchestral.** MOZART: *Masonic Funeral Music* (K477) (Vienna Phil./Karajan. LX1155). A torch-lit, processional piece, in the grand style of the *Adagio and Fugue in C min.* for Strings. The performance is suitably massive, with plenty of bass, but the recording is out of focus and the tone colour rather indefinite. WEBER: *Invitation to the Dance* (Arr. Johnstone) (Liv. Phil./Sargent, DX1549). This new (?) orchestral version is full of novel touches, including an oboe tune (opening of side 2) for which Weber provides no warrant; but I cannot see that it anywhere improves on Berlioz' version, of which the Decca recording (NSO/Fistoulari) is a star. TCHAIKOVSKY: *Casse Noisette*

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*Suite* (Philharmonia/Malko. C3835-7). By and large this set is now the best choice. I still retain a strong affection for Stanford Robinson's intimate and delicately drawn performance (Decca); but the latest issue has the advantages of a more saturated colouring, a greater dynamic range, and a thrilling attack. The recording is strenuous but well managed. RIMSKY-KORSAKOFF: *The Snow-Maiden—Introduction to Prologue and Dance of the Tumblers* (Philharmonia/Collingwood. C3840). Delightful music—fresh and happy. Performance most enlivening and recording quite excellent. SAINT-SAËNS: *Le Rouet d'Omphale* (Paris Conservatoire Orch./Münch. K1695). A flimsy, but very pretty and ingenious little picture. Liszt, minus the pretensions to sublimity. Marvellously played and recorded. DEBUSSY: *Nocturnes—No. 2, Fêtes* (Augusteo/De Sabata. DB6870). Disappointing. Dry and poor in tone. No atmosphere. Oddly inferior to the same orchestra's record of No. 1 (*Nuages*). Old Coppola version (HMV) still preferable, until something better turns up—as may well happen soon. STRAUSS: *Tod und Verklärung*, Op. 24 (LPO/Clemens Krauss. AK1892-4). If the string tone had had rather more body, this set would be entirely satisfactory, for the conception is exactly right and the violent contrasts of the score are knit together in a manner sufficiently impressive to make us reconsider this oleographic tone poem. Recording very comfortable. ROSSINI: *La Scala di Seta—Overture* (LPO/Zecchi. K2123). Toscanini's record of this enchanting overture was too feverish to stand comparison with his best. Even Beecham's is now supplanted by a performance which yields nothing to it in wit and nicety, and is much better recorded.

**Chamber Music, Piano Solo, Organ.** HAYDN: *Quartet in D minor*. Op. 76, No. 2 ("Fifths"); BACH: *Contrapunctus* 1 (Pascal Qt. DB6873-5). A fine, rather unsmiling quartet, otherwise unavailable on disc. The performers impress me as a very able ensemble, but the tone of the recording is too disagreeable to allow of recommending the set. DVORAK: *String Quartet F maj.* Op. 96 ("Nigger") (Griller Qt. AK2080-2). Here again the playing is admirable—careful and sensitive to every detail of a lively and popular work. But—not for the first time—the Decca engineers have failed to make the best of Sidney Griller's rather strident violin. The effect is to spoil an otherwise worthy set. BACH: *Italian Concerto*, and *Prelude and Fugue in B flat* (Backhaus DB6871-2). Inexcusable. If I had not heard it, I would not have believed that so experienced a musician could play so inartistically. A pianola roll, set at much too high a speed, might produce something like the stupefying clatter with which Backhaus polishes off these movements. GRIEG: *Butterfly; Little Bird; Norwegian Bridal Procession* (Gieseking. LB75). Most delicate and intimate. A small but distinct addition to the list of Gieseking's unrivalled recordings. SZYMANOWSKI: *Chant de Roxane*, and FALLA: *La Vida Breve—Danse Espagnole* (Ida Haendel/Kotowska. K1214). Since the deletion of Heifetz's magical rendering, there has been no available record of the mysterious and lovely "Chant de Roxane" (arranged by Kochansky from the soprano solo in Act II of the opera, *King Roger*). The new issue is therefore welcome and can be recommended as adequate in performance and not disagreeable in tone. MENDELSSOHN: *Organ Sonata in A. maj.* Op. 65, No. 3—First movement only (Jeanne Demessieux. K1700). This movement consists of a fugue on an interesting and expressive theme, preceded by a heavy and blatant introduction which is, however, much mitigated by excellent playing and discreet recording.

**Vocal.** BRITTEN: *The Holy Sonnets of John Donne* (Peter Pears/Britten. DB6689-91). An exceptionally fine issue, musically enthralling, brilliantly sung and accompanied (the piano part, in several numbers, is very elaborate and virtuosic). These sonnets are, I think, Britten's most beautiful chamber work since the *Serenade*. The recording is very well balanced. BERG: *Wozzeck—Three Fragments* (Gertrude Ribla/Philadelphia Orch./Ormandy. LX1158-9). At last! But (ungrateful as ever) I cannot wholly applaud this set. The singer is very competent, and the balance does not allow her to drown the orchestra—a mercy for which we should be thankful. But, although she manages the *Sprechstimme* well, her song to the child is deficient in tenderness. The recording is light on bass and the orchestra could have been much more sensitively conducted. In the score the conductor is adjured to take the last three bars of the opera "senza ritenuto" (underlined); but make one he does—which is pretty rotten of him. All the same, these records should be bought; they are the only souvenir we are likely to have, for a long time to come, of this dramatic and beautiful opera. MOZART: *Figaro*—"Voi che sapete"; and *Don Giovanni*—"Batti, batti" (Seefried/Vienna Phil. LB76). "Voi che sapete" is sung unthinkably fast and without sentiment. "Batti, batti" goes better; but here the ballance is unhappy (though not in the usual sense) so that the voice never properly disentangles itself from the orchestra. Not recommended. MOZART: *Don Giovanni*—"Dalla sua pace"; and *Zauberflöte*—"Dies Bildnis" (Dermota/New SO/Krips. K2125). "Dalla sua pace" very lachrymose and croony. "Dies Bildnis" sung with suitable feeling and better taste. The tone quality deteriorates at the centre of the disc. I greatly prefer Tauber's record (Parlophone) of these two arias. ROSSINI: *Il Barbiere*—"All'idea di quel metallo" (Silveri/Infantino/Cov. Garden/Rankl. LX1157). Bravo! We actually hear all the notes—which, considering the florid nature of the music and the operatic style of to-day, is a wonder. A very sprightly record. WAGNER: *Wesendonck Songs*—"Schmerzen" and "Träume" (Flagstad/Moore, DB6842). Mme Flagstad's singing of "Schmerzen" is indeed majestic, but a thought too large in scale for a song. In "Träume" she gives us some beautifully smooth and gentle tone. This is much better than her uninteresting record of "Im Treibhaus" (from the same set) published some months ago. TCHAIKOVSKY: "Ah! qui brula d'amour," and "Pendant le bal" (Gérard Souzay. M633). The first of these songs is our old friend, "Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt," in disguise. Somehow neither is quite right. Possibly M. Souzay is too near the microphone (though his voice does not distort); anyway, the effect is oily and facile. There is so much emotion in the songs that they need a little more distance and composure on the part of the singer. But I don't want to make too much of this criticism, for M. Souzay never fails to give pleasure; and does so here, especially in "Pendant le bal." THOMAS: *Mignon—Polonaise;* and PROCH: *Theme and Variations* (Janine Micheau/Paris Conservatoire/Désormière. K2126). Not at all happy. Mlle. Michaeu's high coloratura is neat enough, so that the Proch *Variations* come off better than the *Polonaise*, which requires a far more impeccable style in the lower registers.

EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

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